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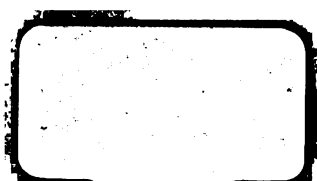
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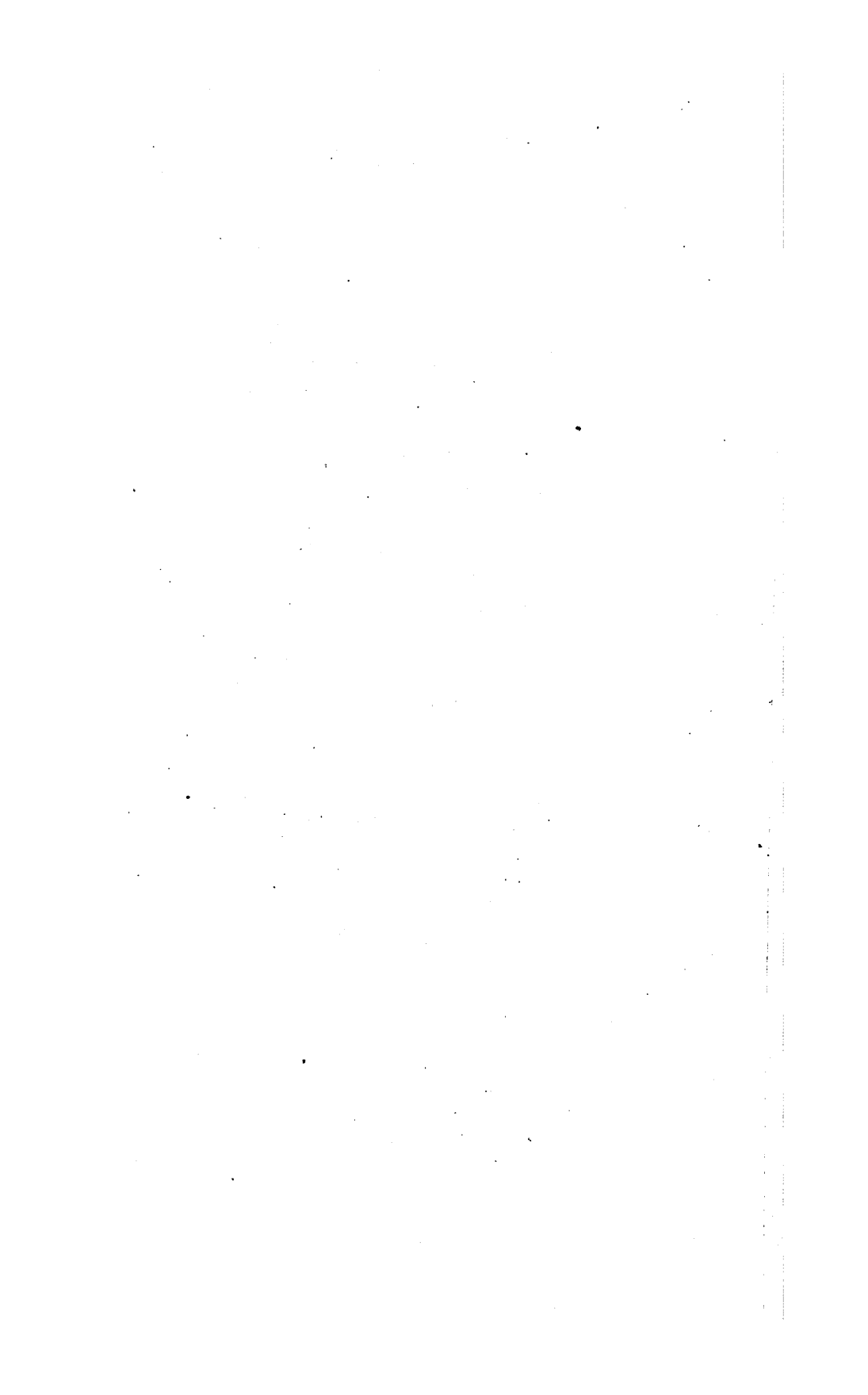
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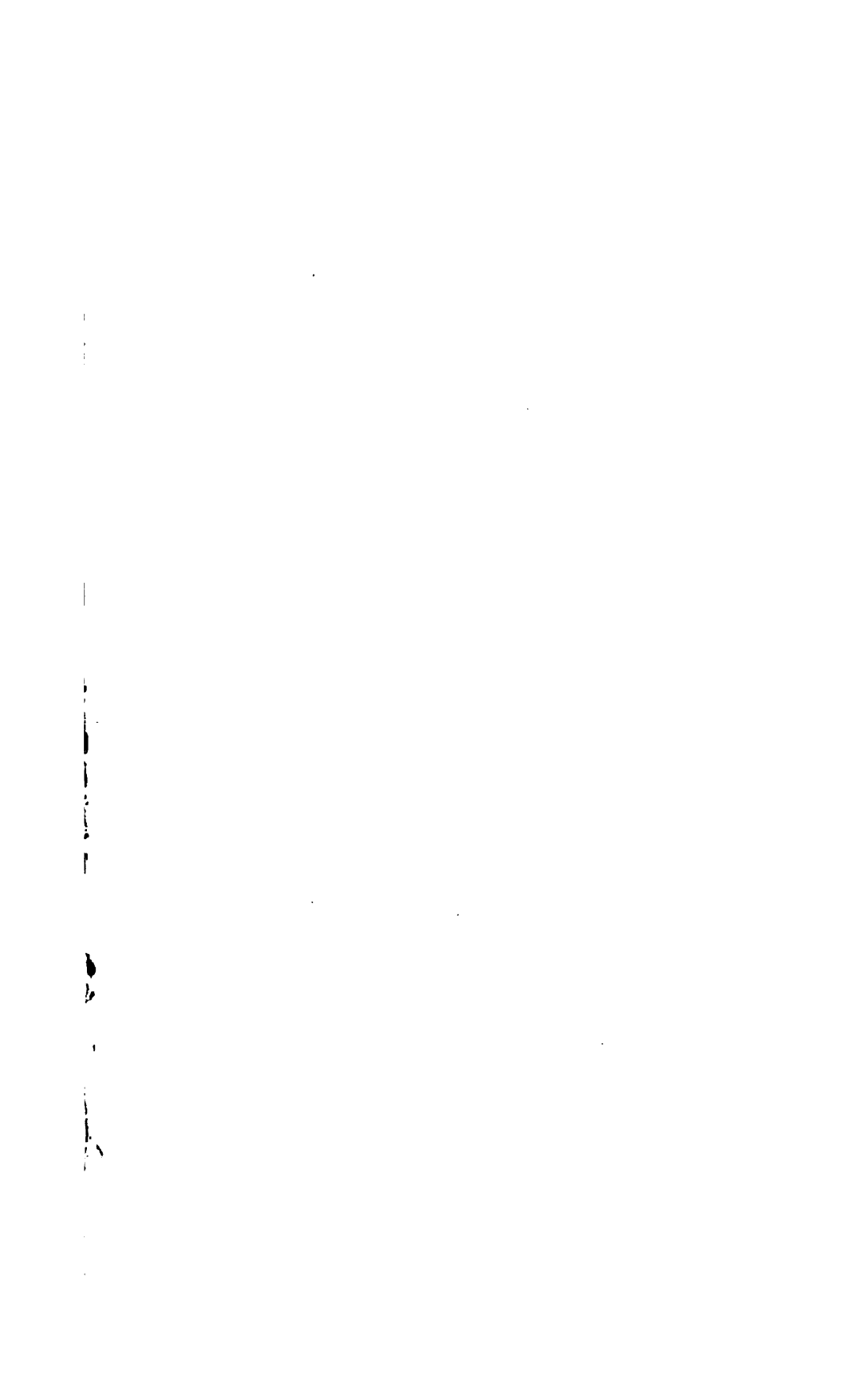


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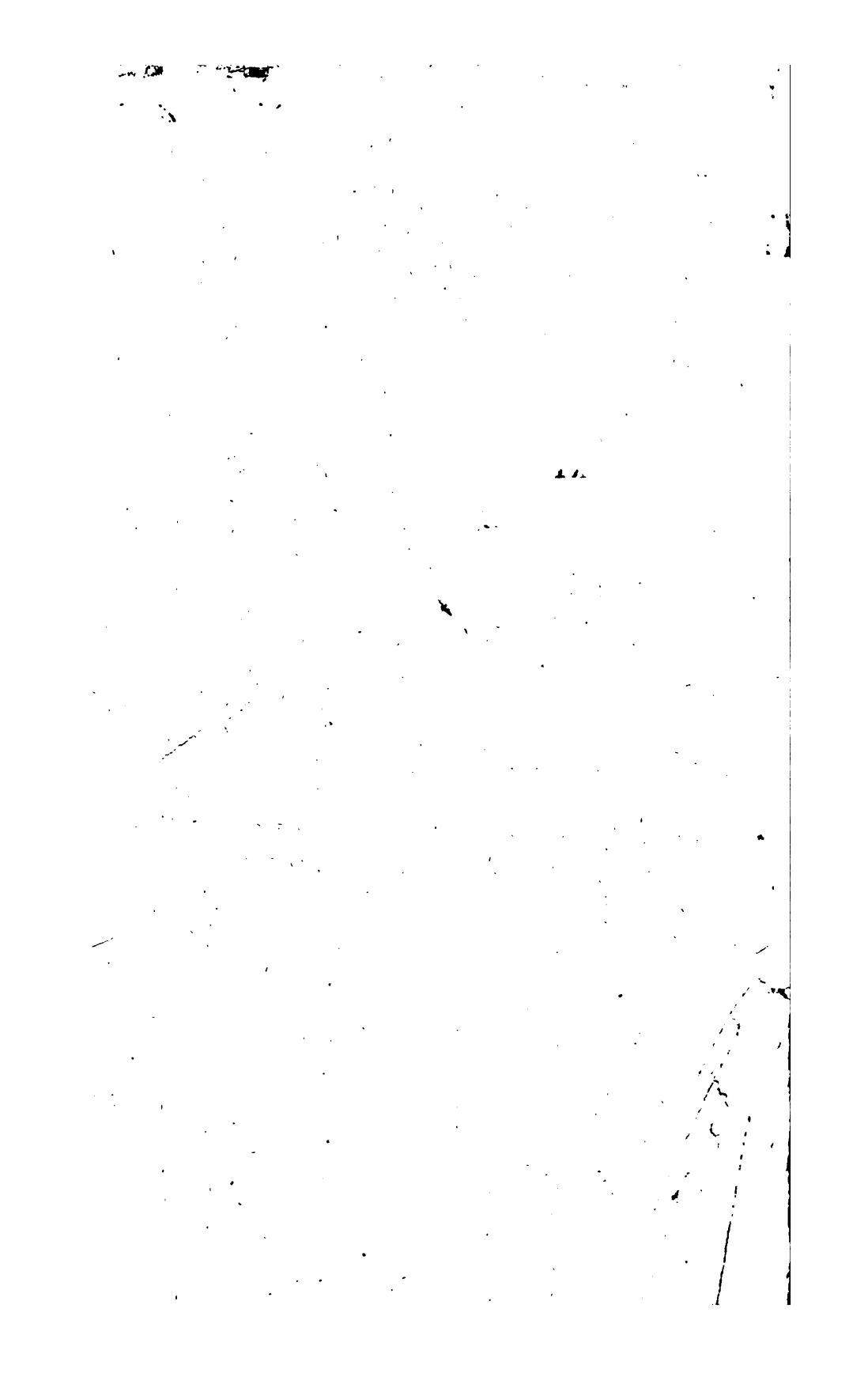
MARY STUART,

A  
TRAGEDY.

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**MARY STUART,**

**A**

**TRAGEDY.**

**BY FREDERICK SCHILLER.**

**TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH**

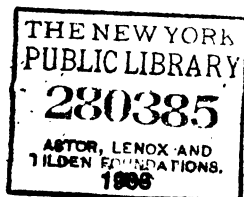
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FOR COTTA, TUBINGEN;  
SOLD BY ESCHER, GERARD-STREET, SOHO; AND  
GRISWELLER, PARLIAMENT-STREET.**

**1801.**



Repair No. 168/03



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PREFACE  
OF  
THE TRANSLATOR.

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IF the Translator of the following Drama has but moderately succeeded in his attempt, he conceives that a Preface to recommend a work of SCHILLER to the English Public would be superfluous. Should he have quite failed in his undertaking, he is also well aware, that the penetration of that Public is such, that no panegyric of his could recommend a mutilated performance to its attention.—Notwithstanding these considerations, he is induced, by reasons which he hopes will not be deemed entirely unsatisfactory, to prefix a short Preface to this Work.

He has been so fortunate as to witness the immediate effect produced, by the representation of

the piece, on a German Audience; he has heard not only very general approbation, but at the same time some tokens of partial disapprobation; and thinks that possibly a double advantage may arise from a short view of the piece, which, while it reconciles to propriety and to truth the points objected to by some German critics, may clear the way for his English readers and enable them to form a more adequate judgment of the merits not only of the whole together, but also of its constituent parts.

The Author has taken his view of the interest attending this historical fable from a new point. The action commences after the commissioners have sentenced Mary. Elizabeth has not yet signed the death-warrant. In the short period between this and her death, the poet has brought an astonishing variety of interest into action, and most of the circumstances, which constituted that of former plays on this subject, are only touched in the dialogue.

The characters appear to be all drawn with wonderful propriety.—It was objected at the re-

presentation of the tragedy, that Mary, by acknowledging in the first Scenes of the first Act, her guilt in conniving at the murder of her husband, departs too much from the character required of a heroine, and abases herself in the eyes of spectators, who are expected to pity her misfortunes.

If a faultless character were, for the purposes of the Drama, a *conditio sine quâ non*, I fear that the history of the world would furnish very few subjects for either heroes or heroines. Mary is represented as what she must be; she is the gold of the mine, intrinsically precious; yet burthened with much extrinsic impurity, which lessens, at the first glance, the value of the royal ore. The fiery ordeal is necessary to develop the metal from the substances with which it is mixed; with every process, her innate worth becomes more and more conspicuous, till at length quite freed from the fortuitous excrescences which deformed her, she enforces that respect, which was perhaps before due to the virtuous part of her character. I know not whether the representation of such a character, with all its imperfections on its head, may not

better serve the purposes of religion and morality, than one supernaturally virtuous ; which, however it may excite our compassion by its unmerited sufferings, would be exempt from the most terrible of all, the consciousness of guilt, and the agony of remorse. Indeed her's appears to be exactly the character which Aristotle chooses as the best possible for dramatic representation : Ἐστὶ δὲ τοιοῦτος, ὃ μήτε ἀρετῇ διαφέρειν, καὶ δικαιοσύνη, μήτε διὰ κακίαν καὶ μοχθηρίαν μετέβαλλαν εἰς τὴν δυσυχίαν, ἀλλὰ δι' αἰμαρτίαν τινὰ. *i. e.* " It is he, who neither excels in virtue and justice, nor through vice and depravity, falls into calamity ; but through some fault incident to human nature." For such the word αἰμαρτία seems to be ; a fault committed, contrary to the natural disposition of the agent, when transported by some violent passion ; and as such it is surely used by the Evangelist.—As to the accusation upon which her sentence was founded, the Poet supposes her innocent. It is a controverted point in history, and he is entitled to his choice. The persecutions she has suffered, for a crime she has not committed, rouse our commiseration ; our

pity is increased by her consciousness, and sincere repentance, of her former guilt; and our minds receive the most religious impression from the indirect, though inevitable, punishment which follows her misdeed. She is at the beginning presented to our contemplation, in her blackest colours—to use her own words,

“ She may say

“ That she is better than her reputation.”

With every new indignity which is offered her, she gains upon our affections; at every step she takes towards the grave, she collects new rays to increase the splendour of her final apotheosis.

The character of Elizabeth is incomparably delineated. Every impartial judge, however nationally bigotted to our illustrious Monarch, must acknowledge in it, the accomplished picture of the ambitious, politic, mistrustful, vain, and jealous woman. The grand outlines have been drawn by the historian; but the picture has been finished, by the masterly pencil of the Poet.

The intriguing, deceitful, weak, interested,



ambitious Leicester ; a man without honour, without generosity, without humanity ; and to crown his character, a coward, is likewise a study from the hints of the historian. Wherever the situations are not strictly authorised by history, they are at least probable, and clash in no instance with the acknowledged principles of the practised courtier.

Shrewsbury is endowed with sterling British honesty ; is undismayed by the cabals of his antagonists, and indefatigable in his endeavours to sustain at once the cause of justice and the renown of his Sovereign, a character worthy of the Talbots ; and although it does not appear from history, that he interested himself so much for Mary's preservation ; yet he was known to have treated her very mildly, and with much friendship, when in his custody.

Paulet is upright and inflexible in what he thinks his duty ; though zealously attached to the reformed church, he disdains with generous indignation, to serve it by an action incompatible with honour, and hides under a rough outside, a

compassionate and forgiving heart. He is the representative of the sturdy Presbyterian of those days.

Burleigh, the deep, the subtle, unfeeling statesman, is yet a man of probity; because acting from principle and conviction. The welfare of the State committed to his direction is the only object of his attention, the rule of all his actions.

The episode of Mortimer, is a masterly effort of creative genius: a character, though not directly authorised by history, yet strictly analogous to it. An attempt to save the Queen of Scots, of which there had been so many examples, is here wisely attributed to a youth, made highly interesting by the enthusiastic zeal which marks his character, and by his becoming unavoidably the destroyer of his mistress and himself. The Author drew this fictitious character as the symbol of the youth of that age. His manners are meant to be the type of the manners then prevailing.

The tournament described in the second act is in the true spirit of the times, when pedantry and the romance of chivalry were strangely mixed. A

tilt of very nearly this description, is mentioned by Pennant, in his *London*, and dated in that age. The entertainments given by Catherine of Medici, previous to the massacre of St. Bartholomew, were also similar to it.

The lyric passages in the beginning of the third act, are I fear, unattainable by any translator. All that I have been able to do, is, to preserve the original metre, and, at least, the thought. To render the expression word for word, I found impossible without altering the structure of the measure. They were intended to express the exultation of a prisoner, on being at length admitted into the open air, and to enjoy at least a temporal liberty. They appear too, to have another very pleasing aim, that of bringing the mind insensibly back to the origin of Tragedy; and perhaps a variation in the measure, was in no instance so happily introduced as in the present.

The meeting of the rival Queens is, indeed, contrary to historical fact; it is, however, by no means contrary to probability. This liberty is allowed the poet even by Aristotle; who, speaking

of the difference between the Historian and the Poet says, "Ἄλλα τὴν διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γέγονε λέγειν, τὸν δὲ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο." i. e. "But this is the difference between them, that the one relates actions as they happened, the other as they might have happened." A meeting had been once projected at York, and it was supposed that nothing but the vanity of Elizabeth, fearing to be eclipsed by Mary's superior charms, prevented its accomplishment. The Author has, therefore, to render it more probable, enlisted into his service another powerful agent in the female breast, curiosity.—Actuated by this, Elizabeth consents to meet her rival. How much this meeting contributes to the hastening of the catastrophe it is unnecessary to observe.

The fiction of Melvil's ordination, and of his administering as it were by stealth, the highest offices of the church, is happily imagined. By the confession of Mary, the mind of the spectator is put out of doubt as to the points of her guilt; he is fill'd with indignation at her *undeserved* sufferings, while her sincere repentance of the crimes she

*has committed*, fills him with sentiments of the deepest commiseration. In short, it appears to me, that her whole history, as here exhibited by the Poet, is admirably calculated to excite the *ἔλεος καὶ φόβον*, the pity and the fear so indispensibly required, by the Stagyrte, as the effects of tragic poetry; however, this matter has been misunderstood by many commentators of the great critic. For his whole meaning is, that the tragic Poet should seek, by the means of pity and fear, to purge as well these, as all other passions incident to humanity; by pointing out proper objects for pity and terror, virtually to teach what objects are unworthy, and thus to attain the height of moral virtue, which Socrates and Plato declared to consist *ἐν τῷ χαίρειν καὶ λυπεῖσθαι οἷς δεῖ*, in rejoicing and grieving in what is worthy of it.

It has been objected against this Scene, that the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is indecent upon the Stage. If this representation were attended by any circumstances calculated to depreciate this religious solemnity,

I should be of the same opinion; but it is conducted with a dignity belonging to the holy office, and, by infusing awe into the minds of the spectators, persuades them the more of the sincerity of Mary's confession. Such a representation could only be indecent, where the sacred function was therein abased. Aristotle, though he preferred the interest arising from events, to that τῆς ὀψέως, or to that arising from the apparatus (what the French call spectacle), intends by no means to decry τὰ τῆς ὀψέως, when employed as auxiliaries. Add to this, that the machinery, on the effect of which he would not have the Poet depend, is that of mere decoration. Here, indeed, is a *Deus ex machinâ*: but surely also, a *dignus vindice nodus*. In the present case, it secures the compassion of the spectator, and thereby conduces much to the interest of the catastrophe. The Greeks, were a polished people, and the masters of mankind, in the perfection of tragedy. It was by them, derived from their religious rites; they thought its intimate connection with religion, was necessary to its attaining the ends proposed by it—it was to

them, not only a moral and political, but also a sacred poem. It is no objection to an imitation of them, that they were heathens ; their morality was good, and the people, on whom the Stage was to operate, had the most exalted ideas of their religious rites ; exposed, as their religion justly was, to objections of every kind, they still thought, it was recommended, rather than depreciated by a public representation of its ceremonies.—Shall we Christians, have a less exalted idea of the doctrines of our faith?

Immediately before her final exit, Mary observes Lord Leicester, amongst those who surround her. The few words, which she then speaks to him, have been construed into a bitterness, unbecoming of her situation, as an absolved penitent. I see no bitterness in the passage ; however meek, she must have been impressed with a sense of Leicester's treachery ; and how could she punish him more mildly, than by simply placing it in his view, and still wishing him, if possible, to be happy ? She must be considered, from the moment of her absolution, as in the service of virtue ; she would

reclaim him; she reproaches him not; she makes him reproach himself.

The only circumstance I could have wished otherwise, is the appearance of Elizabeth, in the fifth act, after the catastrophe. I was well aware that the ancient unities were not strictly applicable to the present arrangement of the Stage; yet, I must own, it appeared to me at first, a too great violation of the unity of place. Upon reflection, however, I am of another opinion. The distance is here purely accidental; there is no moral necessity for the scene of Mary's imprisonment, being at such a distance from the residence of Elizabeth. Had it been in any place of confinement in or near London, the impropriety would have been at least diminished, if not entirely obviated. The Queen of Scotland had received her punishment; she was innocent as to the crime she was accused of; yet, the great principle of distributive justice, is thereby exemplified. It seemed also necessary to shew the situation of her antagonists, particularly of Elizabeth; who, after this arbitrary act, is equally deserted by her



real and pretended friends. So convinced was Voltaire of the necessity of shewing the situation of the criminal, and at the same time so blind to the only mean of accomplishing it, that he makes his Mahomet, in a most artificial speech, describe minutely the horrors of his situation. I need not say how unnatural it is, to make the person under the immediate pressure of calamity, enter into the detail of his own sufferings.—Such reflections are natural for the spectator, and to him they are entirely left in Schiller's Mary Stuart.

The Author, as well as myself, wished this Piece to be acted upon the English Stage. It was not yet finished, when we made the offer of it; which was not even answered. I hope, however, that my translation will not be found to have so mutilated the merits of the original, that the principle of Aristotle will not here too maintain its ground. He says, “*Ἡ γὰρ τῆς τραγωδίας δύναμις, καὶ ἄνευ ἀγώνος, καὶ ὑποκριτῶν ἔστιν.*” For the force of tragedy exists even without the help of representation and actors.

THE TRANSLATOR.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

*Elizabeth, Queen of England.*

*Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, a Prisoner in England.*

*Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.*

*George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury.*

*William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, Lord High-Treasurer.*

*Earl of Kent.*

*Sir William Davison, Secretary of State.*

*Sir Amias Paulet, Keeper of Mary.*

*Sir Edward Mortimer, his Nephew.*

*Count L'Aubespine, the French Ambassador.*

*Count Bellicure, Envoy Extraordinary from France.*

*O'Kelly, Mortimer's Friend.*

*Sir Drue Drury, another Keeper of Mary.*

*Sir Andrew Melvil, her House-Steward.*

*Burgoyne, her Physician.*

*Hannah Kennedy, her Nurse.*

*Margaret Curl, her Attendant.*

*Sheriff of the County.*

*Officer of the Guard.*

*French and English Lords.*

*Soldiers.*

*Servants of State, belonging to Elizabeth.*

*Servants and Female Attendants, of the Queen of Scots.*

## ERRATA.

Page 5, line 4, *for bounds, read bonds.*

— ib. — 6, *for bounds, read bonds.*

— ib. — 8, *for This realm against, read This realm, and  
against.*

— 10, — 2, *for You shall know, &c. read Sir, you shall  
know, &c.*

# MARY STUART.

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## ACT I.

*Scene.*—A COMMON APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE OF  
FOTHERINGHAY.

*Hannah Kennedy contending violently with Paulet, who  
is about to break open a Closet; Drury with an Iron  
Crow.*

KENNEDY.

How now, sir? what's this new temerity?

Back from this closet.—

*Paul.* Say, whence came the jewels?

They from the upper story were thrown down:

They were intended, that we know, to bribe

The gard'ner:—curse on woman's wiles! In spite  
Of all my care, my studious care, still treasures

B

In secret. Where such precious things are hid,  
Lie, without doubt, still more.—

*[breaks open the closet, and searches.]*

*Ken.* Back, bold intruder;—  
Here are deposited my lady's secrets.—

*Paul.* 'Tis even that I seek. *[pulling papers forth.]*

*Ken.* But trifling papers;  
But the amusements of an idle pen,  
To shorten the sad tediousness of bondage.

*Paul.* In idle hours, the evil spirit's busy.

*Ken.* Those writings are in French.—

*Paul.* So much the worse!

That is the language of the foe of England.

*Ken.* Copies of letters to the Queen of England.

*Paul.* I will deliver them :—what glitters here?

*[pulling forth jewels from a secret compartment.]*

A royal diadem so richly set—

With stones, and with the fleurs-de-lys of France!

*[giving it to his companion.]*

Here, take it, Drury, lay it with the rest.—

*[Drury goes.]*

And ye have found the means to hide from us  
Such costly things, and screen them, till this moment,  
From our inquiring eyes?

*Ken.* Oh! how disgraceful  
The violence which we are forced to suffer!

*Paul.* As long as she possesses, she is hurtful;  
For in her hands all things are turn'd to arms.

*Ken.* [*supplicating.*] O, sir! be merciful; deprive  
us not  
Of this last ornament which grac'd our life.  
Oft can the view of ancient grandeur cheer  
The sad depressed captive—all beside  
You have despoil'd us of.—

*Paul.* It is preserv'd  
In careful hands, and when the proper time  
Is come, it will be faithfully restored.

*Ken.* Who could imagine in these naked walls  
A royal residence? Where is the throne?  
Where the imperial canopy of state?  
Must she then set her tender foot, that's us'd  
To softest treading, on this common floor?  
Ignoble pewter serves the royal table;—  
No lady in the land but would disdain it.

*Paul.* 'Twas thus at Stirling, Darnley ate; while she  
Quaff'd with her paramour the golden cup.

*Ken.* The poor assistance of a looking-glass  
Has been refus'd.—

*Paul.* As long as she beholds  
Her own vain image, she will never cease  
To hope, and crown her hopes with deeds of treason.

*Ken.* Books are denied her to divert her mind.—

*Paul.* The Bible's read to her to mend her heart.

*Ken.* And e'en her lute is ta'en from her.—

*Paul.* Because  
She chose to tune it to lascivious airs.

*Ken.* Is this a lot for her, who has been bred  
So tenderly, a queen e'en in her cradle;  
Who, rear'd in Catherine's luxurious court,  
Enjoy'd the plenitude of every pleasure?  
Suffice it to have robb'd her of her power,  
Must ye then envy her its paltry tinsel?  
A generous heart may learn at last the lesson  
To bow itself beneath its great misfortunes;  
But yet it cuts one to the soul, to part  
At once with all life's little outward trappings!

*Paul.* These are the things that turn the human  
heart

To vanity, which should collect itself  
In penitence;—for a lewd, vicious life,  
Want and abasement are the only penance.—

*Ken.* And even if her tender youth did fail,

Her reckoning's with God and her own heart :—

There is no judge in England over her.

*Paul.* There is she judg'd, where she transgress'd  
the laws.

*Ken.* Her narrow bounds restrain her from trans-  
gression.

*Paul.* And yet she found the means to stretch her  
arm

Into the world from out these narrow bounds,  
And, with the torch of civil war, t' inflame  
This realm against our queen, whom God preserve,  
To arm her murderous bands. Did she not rouse  
From out these walls, the malefactor Parry,  
And Babington, to the detested deed  
Of regicide? And did this iron grate  
Prevent her from decoying to her toils  
The virtuous heart of Norfolk? Saw we not  
The first, best head, in all this island, fall  
A sacrifice for her upon the block?—  
The noble house of Howard fell with him.—  
And did this sad example terrify  
These mad adventurers, whose rival zeal  
Plunges for her into this deep abyss?  
The bloody scaffold bends beneath the weight



Of her new daily victims; and we ne'er  
 Shall see an end till she herself, of all  
 The guiltiest, be offer'd up upon it.  
 O! curse upon the day, when England stretch'd  
 Its hospitable arms towards ~~this~~ Helen.

*Ken.* Did England then receive her hospitably?  
*Her*, the unhappy one, who, from the day  
 When she first set her foot within this realm,  
 And, as a suppliant, a banish'd queen,  
 Came to implore protection from her sister,  
 Has been imprison'd, 'gainst the law of nations,  
 And royal dignity, to weep away  
 The fairest years of youth in strictest thralldom.  
 Who now, when she hath suffer'd every thing,  
 Which in imprisonment is hard and bitter,  
 Is summon'd to the bar, like common miscreants,  
 Accus'd disgracefully, and forc'd to plead  
 For life and honour—an anointed queen.

*Paul.* She came as murd'ress hither; driven away  
 By her own people; banish'd from that throne  
 Which she, with such misdeeds, so oft disgrac'd.—  
 Sworn against England's welfare came she hither,  
 To call the Spanish times of bloody Mary  
 Back to this land, to make us Catholics,

And sell us to the false deceitful French.—  
 Say, why disdain'd she to subscribe the treaty  
 Of Edinburgh, to give up her pretensions  
 To England, and thus, with one single word  
 Trac'd by her pen, to ope her prison-gates?  
 No:—she had rather live in vile confinement,  
 And see herself ill-treated, than abandon  
 The hollow dignity of this poor title.—  
 Why did she so? Because she puts her trust  
 In cunning wiles, and the disgraceful arts  
 Of treach'rous plots; and, spinning mischief, hopes  
 To conquer from her prison all this island.

*Ken.* You banter, sir, and add these bitter mockings  
 To your severity:—that *she* should dream  
 Such dreams; *she*, who is here immured alive,  
 To whom no sound of comfort, not a voice  
 Of friendship comes from her beloved country;  
 Who hath so long beheld no human face,  
 But her stern jailor's brows, and sees herself  
 Condemn'd anew to a still harder durance,  
 And that fresh bars are multiplied around her!

*Paul.* No iron-grate is proof against her wiles.—  
 How do I know these bars are not fil'd through?  
 How that this chamber's floor, these walls so strong

Without, may not be hollow from within,  
 And let in felon treach'ry when I sleep?—  
 Accursed office, that's intrusted to me  
 To guard this cunning mother of all ill !  
 Fear rouses me from sleep ; and in the night  
 I, like a troubled spirit, roam and try  
 The strength of every bolt, and put to proof  
 Each guard's fidelity :—I see, with trembling,  
 Th' arrival of each morn, which may confirm  
 My apprehensions :—yet thank God, thank God,  
 There's hope that it will now soon have an end ;  
 For rather would I at the gates of hell  
 Stand sentinel, and guard the dev'lish host  
 Of damned souls, than this deceitful queen.

*Ken.* Here comes the queen.

*Paul.* Christ's image in her hand,  
 Pride, and all worldly lusts within her heart.

*Enter Mary veiled, a Crucifix in her hand.*

*Ken.* [*hastening towards her*] O queen! they trample  
 on us quite ; there is  
 No end of tyranny, of base oppression ;

And each new day heaps new indignities,  
New sufferings on thy crowned head.

*Mary.* Be calm—

Say, what has happ'd anew.—

*Ken.* See here! thy closet

Is forc'd;—thy papers,—and thy only treasure,  
Which with such pains we had secur'd, the last  
Poor remnant of thy bridal ornaments

From France, is in his hands:—thou hast no  
mark

Of royalty remaining—art quite plundered!

*Mary.* Hannah! collect your spirits, and believe  
me,

'Tis not this tinsel which can make a queen:—

Basely indeed they may behave to us,

But they cannot debase us.—I have learnt

To use myself to many a change in England;

I can support this too.—Sir, you have ta'en

By force, what I this very day intended

To have deliver'd to you. There's a letter

Amongst these papers, for my royal sister

Of England—pledge me, sir, your word of honour,

To give it to her majesty's own hands,

And not to the deceitful care of Burleigh.

*Paul.* I shall consider what is right to do.

*Mary.* You shall know its contents—in this letter

I beg a favour, a great favour of her,—

That she herself will give me audience,—

*She*, whom I ne'er have seen.—I have been summon'd

Before a court of men, whom I can never

Consider as my equals, and to whom

My heart denies its confidence:—the queen

Is of my family, my rank, my sex;

To her the sister, her the queen, the woman,

Can I alone unbosom what I feel.

*Paul.* Too oft, my lady, have you plac'd your fate,

Your honour in the hands of men, who were

By far less worthy your respect than these.

*Mary.* I, in the letter, beg another favour,  
And surely nought but inhumanity,

Can here reject my prayer.—These many years

Have I, in prison, miss'd the church's comfort,

The blessing of the sacraments:—I cannot

Suppose that she, to whom I owe the loss

Of crown and liberty, who seeks my life,

Would also shut the gates of heaven against me.

*Paul.* The Dean of Peterborough will attend.—

*Mary.* [*interrupting him with vivacity*] What is the dean to me? I ask the aid

Of one of my own church—a catholic priest.

*Paul.* That is against the publish'd laws of England.—

*Mary.* The laws of England are no rule for me.—

I am not England's subject; I have ne'er

Consented to its laws, and will not bow

Before their cruel and despotic sway.—

If you will, to th' unexampled rigour

Which I have suffer'd, add this new oppression,

I must submit to what your power ordains;

Yet will I raise my voice in loud complaints:—

And I desire a public notary,

And secretaries, to draw up my will—

My sorrows, and this tedious sad confinement,

Prey on my life—my days, I fear, are number'd—

I feel that I am near the gates of death.

*Paul.* These serious contemplations well become you.—

*Mary.* And know I then, that some dispatchful hand

May not abridge this tedious work of sorrow?

I would indite my will, and make disposal  
Of what belongs to me.

*Paul.* This liberty  
May be allow'd you, for the Queen of England  
Will not enrich herself with your poor spoils.

*Mary.* I have been parted from my faithful women,  
And from my servants ;—tell me, sir, where are they ?  
What is their fate ? I can indeed dispense  
At present with their service, yet should I  
Be eased, by knowing that these faithful ones  
Are not exposed to sufferings and want !

*Paul.* Your servants you again shall see ; again  
Shall see whatever has been taken from you :  
All, when the hour is come, shall be restored. [*going.*

*Mary.* And will you quit me thus, sir, thus again,  
And not relieve my fearful anxious heart  
From the fell torments of uncertainty ?  
Thanks to the vigilance of your dependents,  
I am divided from the world ;—no sound  
Can reach me through these prison-walls ;—my fate  
Lies in the hands of those who wish my downfall.  
A painful tiresome month is pass'd already,  
Since, from the queen, the high commissioners  
Surprised me in this castle, and erected

Quick, with unseemly haste, their dread tribunal;  
 They forced me, stunn'd, amaz'd, and unprepar'd,  
 Without an advocate, from memory,  
 Before their unexampled court, to answer  
 Artful premeditated accusations.

—They came like ghosts—like ghosts again they  
 vanish'd,

And since that day all mouths are clos'd to me.  
 In vain I seek to construe from your brows  
 Which hath prevail'd—my cause's innocence  
 And my friend's zeal—or my foe's cursed counsel.  
 O! break at last your silence—let me know  
 What I have still to fear, and what to hope.

*Paul.* Close your accounts with heaven.

*Mary.* From heaven I hope  
 Heaven's mercy, sir;—and from my earthly judges  
 I hope, and still expect, the strictest justice.

*Paul.* Justice, depend upon it, will be done you.

*Mary.* Is the suit ended, sir?

*Paul.* I cannot tell.

*Mary.* Am I condemn'd?

*Paul.* I know of nothing, lady.

*Mary.* Sir, a good work fears not the light of day.

*Paul.* The day will shine upon it, doubt it not.



*Mary.* Dispatch is here the fashion :—is it meant  
The murd'rer shall surprise me, like the judges?

*Paul.* Cherish the thought that 'tis so—he will then  
Find you prepared much better than at present.

*Mary.* [after a pause] Sir, nothing can surprise  
me, which a court,  
Inspired by Walsingham's and Burleigh's hatred,  
May venture to decree :—I am aware,  
At the same time, how far the Queen of England  
May dare to act in confirmation of it.

*Paul.* The sovereigns of England have no fear  
But for their conscience, and their parliament.—  
What justice hath decreed, her fearless hand  
Will execute before collected worlds.

*Enter Mortimer, and, without paying attention to the  
Queen, addresses Paulet.*

*Mort.* You're ask'd for, uncle.

[he retires in the same manner. The Queen remarks  
it, and turns towards Paulet, who is about to  
follow him.]

*Mary.* Sir, one favour more :—  
If you have aught to say to me—from you  
I can bear much—I honour your grey head—

But cannot bear that boy's presumptuous boldness—  
Screen me in future from his savage manners.

*Paul.* I prize him e'en for that which makes you  
hate him :—

He is not, truly, one of those poor fools;  
Whom a false woman's tear can mollify—  
He has seen much—has been in Rome and Paris,  
And brings us back his true old English heart.  
Lady, your cunning arts are lost on him. [Exit.

*Ken.* And dares the ruffian venture to your face  
Such language!—O, 'tis hard—'tis past endurance.

*Mary.* [lost in reflection.] In the fair moments of  
our former splendour

We lent to flatterers a too willing ear ;—  
It is but just and fit, that we should now  
Be forced to hear the earnest voice of censure.

*Ken.* How, so depress'd, so spiritless, my queen,—  
You, who before so gay, so full of hope,  
Were used to comfort me in my affliction?  
Till now, I rather was obliged to blame  
Your levity, than your too heavy sadness.

*Mary.* I know him well—it is the bleeding shade  
Of Darnley, of my husband, which arises  
From his sepulchral vault, and never will,

No, never will he make his peace with me  
Until the measure of my woes is full.

*Ken.* What thoughts!—

*Mary.* O! you forget it—I cannot—  
I have a faithful mem'ry—'tis this day  
Another wretched anniversary  
Of that regretted, that unhappy action—  
Which I must celebrate with fast and penance.

*Ken.* Dismiss at length in peace this evil spirit.  
A penitence of many a heavy year,  
Of many a suffering, has atoned the deed:  
The church, which holds the key of absolution,  
Pardons the crime, and heav'n itself's appeas'd.

*Mary.* This long atoned crime arises fresh  
And bleeding from its lightly cover'd grave—  
My husband's spirit ranges for revenge—  
No sacring bell can exorcise this spirit—  
No host in holy hands can quiet it.

*Ken.* You did not murder him—'twas done by  
others.

*Mary.* But it was known to me;—I suffer'd it,  
And lured him, flatt'ring, to the toils of death.

*Ken.* Your youth excuses you—your tender  
years—

*Mary.* So young, and so untender—to weigh down  
My infant years with this so heavy crime!

*Ken.* You were provok'd by bloody injuries,  
And by the rude presumption of that man,  
Whom out of darkness, like the hand of heav'n,  
Your love drew forth, and above all exalted;  
Whom through your bridal chamber you conducted  
Up to your throne, and with your lovely self,  
And your hereditary crown, distinguish'd:—  
Your work was his existence, and your grace  
Bedew'd him like the gentle rains of heav'n.  
Could he forget, that his so splendid lot  
Was the creation of your gen'rous love?  
Yet did he, worthless as he was, forget it.  
With base suspicions, and with brutal manners,  
He wearied your affections, and became  
An object of deserv'd disgust to you:—  
Th' illusion, which till now had overcast  
Your judgment, vanish'd; angrily you fled  
His foul embrace, and gave him up to scorn.  
And *he*, did he attempt to win again  
Your favour? Did he implore your pardon?  
Did he, as 'twere his duty so to do,  
Assure you on his knees of his repentance?

No; the base wretch defied you :—he, who was  
Your bounty's creature, wish'd to play your king,  
And strove, through fear, to force your inclination.  
Before your eyes he had your fav'rite singer,  
Poor Rizzio, murder'd: you did but avenge  
With blood, the bloody deed——

*Mary.* And bloodily,  
I fear, too soon 'twill be aveng'd on me :—  
You seek to comfort me, and you condemn me.

*Ken.* You were not, when this deed was perpetrated,  
Yourself—belong'd not to yourself—the fire  
Of a blind frantic passion then possess'd you,  
And bound you to a terrible seducer,  
The wretched Bothwell ;—the despotic man  
Rul'd you with wilful masculine presumption,  
And heated with his philters, and the arts  
Of hell, your passions.

*Mary.* All the arts he us'd  
Were his superior strength, and woman's weakness.

*Ken.* No, no, I say :—the most pernicious spirits  
Of hell must have been call'd upon by him,  
To cast this mist before your waking senses.  
Your ear was no more open to the voice  
Of friendly warning, and your eyes were shut

To decency; soft female bashfulness  
 Deserted you; those cheeks, which were before  
 The seat of shame-fac'd blushing modesty,  
 Glow'd with the flames of unrestrain'd desire:  
 You cast away the veil of secrecy,  
 And the flagitious daring of the man  
 O'ercame your nat'ral coyness: you expos'd  
 To public view, unblushing, your dishonour:  
 You let the murd'rer, whom the people follow'd  
 With curses, through the streets of Edinburgh  
 Before you bear the royal sword of Scotland  
 In triumph: you with armed bands surrounded  
 Your parliament: and, in the very temple  
 Of Justice, by this shameless pantomime,  
 You forc'd the judges of the land to clear  
 The murderer of murder. You went farther—  
 O God!

*Mary.* Conclude—nay, pause not—say I gave him  
 For this, my hand in marriage at the altar.

*Ken.* O let an everlasting silence veil  
 This deed! it is too dreadful, too revolting—  
 It was the deed of a lost profligate:—  
 Yet you, I know, are no lost profligate.  
 'Twas I who rear'd your youth—your heart is fram'd

For tender softness : open are its feelings  
 To shame ; and levity's your only fault.  
 I do repeat it, there are evil spirits,  
 Who sudden fix in man's defenceless breast  
 Their fatal residence, and there delight  
 To act their dev'lish deeds ; then hurry back  
 Unto their native hell, and leave behind  
 Remorse and horror in the sullied bosom.  
 Since this misdeed, which blackens thus your life,  
 You have done nothing ill ; your conduct has  
 Been virtuous ; I can witness your amendment. —  
 Take courage, then ; with your own heart make peace.  
 Whate'er you may repent of, here in England  
 You are not guilty. Not Elizabeth,  
 Not England's parliament can be your judge.  
 Here *might* oppresses you :—you may present  
 Yourself before this self-created court  
 With all the fortitude of innocence.

*Mary.* I hear a step approaching.

*Ken.* 'Tis the nephew—

Retire.

*Enter Mortimer, approaching cautiously.*

Mort. [*to Kennedy.*] Step to the door, and watch  
with care;

I have important business with the Queen.

Mary. [*with dignity.*] I charge thee, Hannah, go not  
hence—stay here.

Mort. Fear not, my gracious lady,—learn to know  
me. [*he gives her a card.*]

Mary. [*she examines it, and starts back astonished.*]

Heav'ns! what is this?—

Mort. [*to Kennedy.*] Retire, good Kennedy;  
See that my uncle comes not unawares.

Mary. [*to Kennedy, who hesitates, and looks at the  
Queen inquiringly.*] Go in; do as he bids you.

[*Kennedy retires with signs of wonder.*]

Mary. From my uncle  
In France, the worthy Cardinal of Lorraine?

[*she reads.*]

“ Confide in Mortimer, who brings you this;

“ You have no truer friend than him in England.”

[*looking at him with astonishment.*]

Is't possible? And is it no delusion



Which cheats my sight? And find I then a friend  
So near, when I conceiv'd myself abandon'd  
By the whole world? And find I him in you,  
The nephew of my jailer, whom I thought  
My most invet'rate enemy?

*Mort.* [*kneeling.*] O pardon,  
My gracious lady, for the hated mask,  
Which it has cost me pain enough to wear;  
And yet through that alone am I enabled  
To see you, and to bring you help and rescue.

*Mary.* Arise, Sir; you astonish me; I cannot  
So suddenly emerge from the abyss  
Of wretchedness to hope: let me conceive  
This happiness, that I may credit it.

*Mort.* Our time is precious: I expect each moment  
My uncle, whom a hated man attends:  
Hear then, before his terrible commission  
Surprizes you, how heav'n prepares your rescue.

*Mary.* A wonder 'tis of heav'n's omnipotence.

*Mort.* Allow me of myself to speak.

*Mary.* Speak, Sir.

*Mort.* I had already counted twenty years,  
Bred up, my Queen, in the most rigid duties,  
And having suck'd, e'en with my mother's milk,

A deadly hate to Papacy, when led  
 By a strong, irresistible desire  
 For foreign travel, I resolv'd to leave  
 My country and its puritanic faith  
 Far, far behind me: I then flew through France  
 With rapid speed, and sought with eager wish  
 The boasted plains of Italy. It was  
 The time of the great Jubilee:—the crowds  
 Of swarming palmers fill'd the public roads;  
 Each image was adorn'd with garlands; 'twas  
 As if all human kind were wand'ring forth  
 In pilgrimage towards the heav'nly kingdom.  
 The tide of the believing multitude  
 Bore me too onward with resistless force,  
 Into the streets of Rome. What was my wonder,  
 As the magnificence of stately columns  
 Rush'd on my sight! the vast triumphal arches,  
 The Colisseum's grandeur, with amazement  
 Struck my admiring senses; the sublime  
 Creative spirit held my soul a pris'ner  
 In this fair world of wonders it had fram'd.  
 Till now, the arts had never work'd on me.  
 The church that rear'd me hates the charms of sense;  
 It tolerates no image, it adores

But the unseen, th' incorporeal word.  
 What were my feelings then, as I approach'd  
 The threshold of the churches, and ent'ring,  
 Heard heav'n's harmonies floating in the air :  
 While from the walls and high-wrought roofs the forms  
 Celestial beamed in fulness of perfection :—  
 When the most High, most Glorious, pervaded  
 My captivated sense in real presence !  
 And when I saw the godlike visions,  
 The Salutation, the Nativity,  
 The holy Mother, and the Trinity's  
 Descent, the luminous Transfiguration :  
 At last I glad beheld the Pope, in all  
 The glory of his office, bless the people !  
 O ! what's the pageantry of gold and jewels  
 With which the kings of earth adorn themselves !  
*He* is alone surrounded by the Godhead ;  
*His* mansion is in truth an heav'nly kingdom,  
 For not of earthly moulding are these forms !

*Mary.* O ! spare me, Sir ; no further—spread no  
 more.

Life's verdant carpet out before my eyes,  
 For I am wretched, and a prisoner.

*Mort.* I was a prisoner too, my Queen ; but quick

My prison-gates flew open ; when at once  
 My spirit felt its liberty, and hail'd  
 The smiling dawn of life. I learn'd to burst  
 Each narrow prejudice of education,  
 To crown my brows with never-fading garlands,  
 And mix my joy with the rejoicing crowd.  
 Full many noble Scots, who saw my zeal,  
 Encourag'd me, and with the lively French  
 They kindly led me to your princely uncle,  
 The Cardinal Archbishop.

What a man !

How learn'd, how clear, how manly, how sublime !  
 He's born to regulate the human mind !  
 The very model of a royal priest ;  
 A ruler of the church without an equal !

*Mary.* Have you then seen the much lov'd, honour'd  
 man,

Who was the guardian of my tender years !  
 O speak of him ! Does he remember me ?  
 Does fortune favour him ? And blossoms still  
 His life ? And does he still majestic stand,  
 The rock on which the church of God is built ?

*Mort.* The holy man descended from his height,  
 And deign'd to construe to me the deep lessons

Of the true church, and dissipate my doubts.  
 He prov'd to me, that man's too plodding reason  
 Serves but to lead him to eternal error:  
 That what his heart is call'd on to believe,  
 His eyes must see : that he who rules the church  
 Must needs be visible ; and that the spirit  
 Of truth inform'd the councils of the Fathers.  
 How vanish'd then the fond imaginations  
 And weak conceptions of my childish soul  
 Before his conquering judgment, and the soft  
 Persuasion of his tongue ! He then led me  
 Forth to the altar, where I deliver'd  
 Into his holy hands my abjuration.

*Mary.* You then are one of those so many thousands  
 Whom he, with his celestial eloquence,  
 Like the immortal preacher of the mount,  
 Has turn'd, and led to everlasting joy !

*Mort.* The duties of his office call'd him soon  
 To France, and I attended him to Rheims,  
 Where, piously employ'd, the brotherhood  
 Of Jesus fashion priests for England's church.  
 There, 'mongst the Scots, I found the noble Morgan,  
 And your true Lesley, Ross's learned bishop,  
 Who pass in France the joyless days of exile.

I join'd with heartfelt zeal these worthy men,  
 And fortified my faith. As I one day  
 Roam'd through the Bishop's dwelling, I was struck  
 With a fair female portrait; it was full  
 Of touching, wond'rous charms; with magic might  
 It mov'd my inmost soul, and there I stood  
 Speechless, and overmaster'd by my feelings.  
 "Well," cried the Bishop, "well may you behold  
 "This face with such a mournful, fond emotion!  
 "For the most beautiful of womankind,  
 "Is the most lamentable too of women!  
 "She suffers for our faith, and 'tis your country  
 "Which is the sad scene of her sufferings!"

*[Mary is in great agitation; he pauses.]*

*Mary.* The upright man! no—I have not lost all,  
 If such a friend remains in my misfortunes!

*Mort.* Then with heart-rending eloquence he painted  
 Your martyrdom, the bloody enmity  
 Of your oppressors, and at last he shew'd me  
 Your pedigree, and prov'd your high descent  
 From the great house of Tudor. He convinc'd me  
 That you alone are born to reign in England,  
 And not this base pretender, who, the fruit  
 Of an adult'rous bed, was by her father;

Henry the Eighth, rejected as a bastard.  
 He from my eyes remov'd delusion's mist,  
 And taught me to lament you as a victim,  
 To honour you as my true Queen, whom I,  
 Deceiv'd, like thousands of my noble fellows,  
 Had ever hated as my country's foe.  
 I would not trust his evidence alone;  
 I question'd learned doctors; I consulted  
 The most authentic books of heraldry;  
 And every man of knowledge, whom I ask'd,  
 Confirm'd to me your claim's validity.  
 And now I know the justice of that claim.  
 To England, is the spring of this injustice.  
 This realm is your hereditary right,  
 In which you innocently pine as pris'ner.

*Mary.* O this unhappy right!—'tis this alone  
 Which is the source of all my sufferings.

*Mort.* About this time the news arriv'd at Rheims  
 Of your removal from old Talbot's ward,  
 And that you were committed to my uncle.  
 It seem'd to me that this disposal mark'd  
 The mystic, succ'ring hand of fav'ring heav'n:  
 It seem'd to be a loud decree of fate,  
 That it had chosen me to rescue you.

My friends agree with me; the Cardinal  
Imparts to me his counsel and his blessing,  
And tutors me in the hard task of feigning.  
The plan in haste digested, I commence  
My journey homewards, and ten days ago  
I landed, as you must have heard, in England.

*[he pauses.]*

I saw you, gracious Queen; saw you, yourself—  
Your picture 'twas no more! O what a treasure  
This castle's walls enclose! It is no prison :  
By far more splendid than the royal court  
Of England, 'tis a mansion for the gods.  
Happy, thrice happy he, whose envied lot  
It is to breathe one atmosphere with you!  
Her's is a prudent policy, who thus  
Has buried you so deep! Th' united youth  
Of England would rise up in mutiny,  
And not a sword lie quiet in its sheath :  
Rebellion, with his giant-head, would stalk  
Fierce through this land of peace, if once the Britons  
Beheld their Queen.

*Mary.* O! she indeed were happy,  
If ev'ry Briton saw her with your eyes!

*Mort.* Were each, like me, a witness of your sorrows,



Your meekness, and the noble patient courage  
 With which you suffer these indignities—  
 Emerge you not from all these bitter trials  
 Like a true Queen? your prison's infamy,  
 Hath it then soil'd the splendour of your beauty?  
 You are depriv'd of all that graces life,  
 Yet life and light eternal beam around you.  
 I never set my foot upon this threshold,  
 But that my heart is torn at once with anguish,  
 And ravish'd with delight at gazing on you.  
 Yet fearfully the fatal time approaches,  
 And danger hourly growing presses on.  
 I can delay no longer—can no longer  
 Disguise the dreadful news.—

*Mary.* Is then my sentence  
 Pronounc'd? Declare it freely—I can hear it.

*Mort.* It is pronounc'd! the two-and-forty  
 judges

Have giv'n the verdict, “ guilty,” and the houses  
 Of lords and commons, with the citizens  
 Of London, eagerly and urgently  
 Demand its execution:—tis the Queen  
 Alone who hesitates—but not, believe me,  
 From feelings of humanity or mercy:

'Tis craftiness which guides her; and she hopes  
To seem oblig'd to act this cruel part.

Mary. [*collected.*] Sir, I am not astonish'd—am not  
frighten'd:

I have been long prepar'd for such a message.

I know my judges:—after the treatment

Which I have suffer'd, I can well conceive

That they cannot restore my liberty.

I know their aim: they mean to keep me here

In everlasting bondage, and to bury,

In the sepulchral darkness of my prison,

With me, my vengeance and my rightful claims.

Mort. No, Queen,—O! no—no;—they will not  
stop there;

Oppression will not be content to do

Its work by halves:—as long as e'er you live,

Lives too the terror of the Queen of England.

No dungeon can inter you deep enough;

It is your death alone secures her throne.

Mary. Will she then dare to lay disgracefully

My crowned head beneath the bloody axe?

Mort. She will most surely dare it, doubt it not.

Mary. And can she thus roll in the very dust,

Her own, and ev'ry monarch's majesty?

*Mort.* She thinks on nothing now but present  
danger,  
Nor looks to that which is so far remov'd.

*Mary.* And fears she not the dread revenge of  
France?

*Mort.* With France she makes an everlasting peace;  
Gives to the Duke of Anjou throne and hand.

*Mary.* Will not the King of Spain then arm  
himself?

*Mort.* She fears not a collected world in arms,  
If she but be at peace with her own people.

*Mary.* Were this a spectacle for British eyes?

*Mort.* This land, my Queen, has, in these latter days,  
Seen many a royal woman from the throne  
Descend, and mount the scaffold :—her own mother,  
And Cath'rine Howard too, were sent this road;  
And was not Lady Grey a crowned head?

*Mary.* [*after a pause.*] No, Mortimer, vain fears  
have blinded you;  
'Tis but the honest care of your true heart,  
Which conjures up these empty apprehensions.  
It is not, Sir, the scaffold that I fear :—  
There are so many far more quiet means,  
By which the Queen of England can secure

Her quiet 'gainst my claims : were it not easy,  
 Before an executioner were found,  
 To hire a murd' rer to rid her of me ?  
 'Tis that which makes me tremble, Mortimer :  
 I never lift the goblet to my lips  
 Without an inward shudd' ring, that the draught  
 May have been mingled by my sister's love.

*Mort.* No :—neither open nor disguised murder  
 Shall e'er prevail against you :—fear no more ;  
 All is prepar'd ;—twelve nobles of the land  
 Are my confederates, and to-day have pledg'd,  
 Upon the Sacrament, their faith to free you,  
 With dauntless force, from this captivity.  
 Count l'Aubespine, the French Ambassador,  
 Knows of our plot, and offers his assistance :  
 'Tis in his palace that we hold our meetings.

*Mary.* You make me tremble, Sir, but not for  
 joy ;  
 An evil boding penetrates my heart.  
 Know you then what you risk ? Are you not scar'd  
 By Babington's and Tichburn's bloody heads,  
 Expos'd as warnings upon London's bridge ?  
 Nor by the ruin of those many victims  
 Who have, in such attempts, found certain death,

And only made my chains the heavier?  
 Fly hence, deluded, hapless youth!—fly hence  
 While yet you may, if yet you may; if Burleigh,  
 That crafty spy, hath not already trac'd  
 Your schemes, and mix'd his traitors in your plot;  
 Fly hence:—as yet, hath no successful champion  
 Protected Mary Stuart.

*Mort.* I'm not scar'd  
 By Babington's and Tichburn's bloody heads,  
 Expos'd as warnings upon London's bridge;  
 Nor by the ruin of those many victims  
 Who have, in such attempts, found certain death:  
 They also found therein immortal honour,  
 And for your rescue, death is happiness.

*Mary.* It is in vain: nor force nor guile can save  
 me:—

My enemies are watchful, and the might  
 Is in their hands. It is not Paulet only  
 And his dependant host; all England guards  
 My prison gates; Elizabeth's free will  
 Alone can open them.

*Mort.* Expect not that.

*Mary.* One man alone on earth can open them.

*Mort.* O! name me then that man!

*Mary.* Lord Leicester.

*Mort.* Leicester ? *[starts back in wonder.*

The Earl of Leicester ? your most bloody foe,  
The fav'rite of Elizabeth ?—through him—

*Mary.* 'Tis possible to save me, and alone  
Through him is't possible. Go to him, Sir ;  
Freely confide in him ; and, as a proof  
That you are sent by me, give him this paper.

*[she takes a paper from her bosom: Mortimer draws  
back, and hesitates to take it.*

My picture's in this letter :—take it, Sir ;  
I bear it long about me : the wary  
Attention of your uncle cuts me off  
From all communication ;—you were sent  
By my good angel. *[he takes it.*

*Mort.* O my Queen ! this riddle,  
Explain it me.

*Mary.* Lord Leicester will resolve it :  
Confide in him, and he'll confide in you.  
Who comes ?

*Ken.* *[entering hastily.]* 'Tis Paulet ; and he brings  
with him

A nobleman from court.

*Mort.* It is Lord Burleigh.

Collect yourself, my Queen, and strive to hear  
The news he brings you, with indifference.

*[he retires through a side door, and Kennedy follows him.]*

*Enter Lord Burleigh, and Paulet.*

Paul. *[to Mary.]* You wish'd to-day, with certainty to know

Your fate : my Lord of Burleigh brings you now  
This certainty : receive it with submission.

Mary. I hope with dignity, as it becomes  
My innocence, and my exalted station.

Bur. I come deputed from the court of justice.

Mary. Lord Burleigh lends that court his willing  
tongue,

Which was already guided by his spirit.

Paul. You speak as if no stranger to the sentence.

Mary. Lord Burleigh brings it me ; I therefore  
know it.

Paul. It would become you better, Lady Stuart,  
To listen less to hatred.

Mary. I but name  
My enemy : I said not that I hate him.  
Sir, to the business.

*Bur.* You have acknowledg'd  
The jurisdiction of the two-and-forty.

*Mary.* My Lord, excuse me, if I am oblig'd  
So soon to interrupt you. I acknowledg'd,  
Say you, the competence of the commission?  
I never have acknowledg'd it, my Lord;  
Indeed I could not; could not give away  
My own prerogative, the dignity  
Of my own people, the inheritance  
Of my own son, and ev'ry monarch's honour.  
The very laws of England say I could not.  
It is enacted by an English statute,  
That ev'ry prisoner shall be accus'd  
And tried before a jury of his equals:—  
Who is my equal in this high commission?  
Kings only are my peers.

*Bur.* But yet you heard  
The points of accusation, answer'd them  
Before the court——

*Mary.* 'Tis true, I was deceiv'd  
By Hatton's crafty counsel:—he advis'd me,  
For my own honour, and in confidence  
In my good cause, and my most strong defence,  
To listen to the points of accusation,



And prove their falsehood. *This, my Lord, I did*  
 From personal respect for the Lords' names,  
 Not their usurped charge, which I disdain.

*Bur.* Acknowledge you the court, or not, that is .  
 Only a point of mere formality,  
 Which cannot stop the steady course of justice.  
 You breathe the air of England; you enjoy  
 The law's protection, and its benefits;  
 You therefore are its subject.

*Mary.* Sir, I breathe  
 The air within an English prison's walls :—  
 Is that to live in England; to enjoy  
 The law's protection? I do scarcely know  
 These laws, and never pledg'd my faith to keep them.  
 I am no member of this realm; I am  
 An independent, and a foreign Queen.

*Bur.* And think you, then, the hollow name of  
 Queen,  
 Can serve you as a charter to foment  
 In other countries, with impunity,  
 This bloody discord? Where would be the safety  
 Of Government, if the good sword of justice  
 Could not as easy smite the guilty forehead  
 Of the imperial stranger, as the beggar's?

*Mary.* I do not wish to be exempt from judgment,  
My Lord, the judges only I disclaim.

*Bur.* The judges? how my Lady? Are they  
then

Base wretches, snatch'd at hazard from the crowd?  
Or shameless wranglers, selling truth and justice;  
Oppression's willing hirelings, and its tools?  
Are they not, then, the chiefest of this land,  
Whose independence teaches them to dare  
Be honest, and above the dread of princes,  
Look down disdainfully on all temptation?  
Are they not those, who rule a gen'rous people  
In liberty and justice; men, whose names  
I need but mention, to destroy each doubt,  
Each mean suspicion, which is rais'd against them?  
Stands not the rev'rend Primate at their head,  
The pious Archbishop of Canterbury,  
The learned Bromley, Lord High Chancellor,  
And Howard, who conducts our conqu'ring fleets?  
Say, then, could England's sovereign do more  
Than, out of all the monarchy, elect  
The very noblest, and appoint them judges  
In this great suit? And were it probable  
That party hatred could corrupt one heart;

Can forty chosen men unite themselves  
To speak a sentence dictated by passion ?

Mary. [*after a short pause.*] I hear with wonder  
that tongue's eloquence,

Which ever was so ominous to me.

How shall I, an untutor'd woman, cope  
With a so learned, subtle orator ?

Yes truly ; were these Lords as you describe them,  
I must be mute ; my cause, beyond all hope,  
Were lost, if such a court pronounc'd me guilty.  
But, Sir, these names, which you are pleas'd to praise,  
These very men, whose weight you think will crush  
me,

I see performing in the history  
Of these dominions, very different parts ;  
I see this high nobility of England,  
This grave majestic senate of the realm,  
Like to an eastern monarch's vilest slaves,  
Flatter my uncle Henry's sultan fancies :  
I see this noble rev'rend House of Lords,  
Venal alike with the corrupted Commons ;  
Make statutes and annul them, ratify  
A marriage and dissolve it, as the voice  
Of power commands ; to-day it disinherits,

And brands the royal daughters of the realm  
 With the vile name of bastards, and to-morrow  
 Crowns them as queens, and leads them to the throne.  
 I see them in four reigns, with pliant conscience,  
 Four times abjure their faith; renounce the Pope  
 With Henry, yet retain the old belief;  
 Reform themselves with Edward; hear the mass  
 Again with Mary; with Elizabeth,  
 Who governs now, reform themselves again.

*Bur.* You say you are a stranger, Lady Stuart,  
 To England's laws; but yet you seem'd well read  
 In the sad history of its misfortunes.

*Mary.* And these men are my judges?

*[as Lord Burleigh seems to wish to speak.]*

Lord High Treas'rer,  
 Tow'rds you I will be just, be you but just  
 Tow'rds me.—'Tis said, that you consult with zeal  
 The good of England, and of England's Queen;  
 Are honest, watchful, indefatigable:  
 I will believe it: you are not conducted  
 By private interest: the monarch's welfare,  
 The realm's advantage, only governs you:  
 Therefore, my noble Lord, you should the more  
 Distrust your heart; should see that you mistake not

The welfare of the government, for justice.  
 I doubt it not, that by your side is plac'd  
 Full many an upright man among my judges :  
 But they are Protestants, are eager all  
 For England's quiet, and they sit in judgment  
 On me, the Queen of Scotland, and the Papist.  
 It is an ancient saying, that the Scots  
 And English are unjust towards each other ;  
 And hence the rightful custom, that a Scot  
 Against an Englishman, an Englishman  
 Against a Scot, cannot be heard in judgment.  
 Necessity prescrib'd this cautious law ;  
 Deep policy oft lies in ancient customs :  
 My Lord, we must respect them. Nature cast  
 Into the ocean these two fiery nations  
 Upon this plank, and she divided it  
 Unequally, and bade them fight for it.  
 The narrow bed of Tweed alone divides  
 These daring spirits ; often hath the blood  
 Of the contending parties dy'd its waves.  
 Threat'ning, and sword-in-hand these thousand years,  
 From both its banks they watch the rival's motions,  
 Most vigilant and true confederates,  
 With ev'ry enemy of the neighbour state.

No foe oppresses England, but the Scot  
 Becomes his firm ally; no civil war  
 Enflames the towns of Scotland, but the English  
 Add fuel to the fire: this raging hate  
 Will never be extinguish'd till, at last,  
 One parliament in concord shall unite them,  
 One sceptre shall command throughout the isle.

*Bur.* And from a Stuart, then, should England hope  
 This happiness?

*Mary.* O! why should I deny it?  
 Yes, I confess, I cherish'd the fond hope,  
 I thought myself the happy instrument  
 To join, beneath the olive's shade, in freedom,  
 And lasting happiness, two gen'rous nations!  
 I little thought I should become the victim  
 Of their old hate, their long-liv'd jealousy,  
 And the sad flames of that unhappy discord,  
 I hop'd at last to smother, and for ever:  
 And, as my ancestor, great Richmond, join'd  
 The rival roses after bloody contest,  
 To join in peace the Scotch and English crowns.

*Bur.* An evil way it was to this good purpose,  
 To set the realm on fire, and through the flames  
 Of civil war to strive to mount the throne.

*Mary.* I wish'd not that:—by the great God of  
heaven,

When did I strive at that? Where are your proofs?

*Bur.* I came not hither to dispute; your cause  
Is no more subject to a war of words.

The great majority of forty voices  
Hath sentenc'd that you have transgress'd the statute  
Enacted the last year, and have incurr'd

Its penalty. *[producing the verdict.]*

*Mary.* Upon this statute, then,  
My Lord, is built the verdict of my judges?

*Bur.* *[reading.]* Last year it was enacted “ If a  
tumult

“ Or plot should rise in England, in the name  
“ Or for the benefit of any claimant  
“ To England's crown, that justice should be done  
“ On such pretender, and the guilty party  
“ Be prosecuted unto death.” Now, since  
It has been prov'd——

*Mary.* Lord Burleigh, I can well  
Imagine that a law expressly aim'd  
At me, and only fram'd for my destruction,  
May to my prejudice be us'd: O ! woe  
To the unhappy victim, when the tongue,

Which dictates, executes at once the law.  
Can you deny it, Sir, that this same statute  
Was made for my destruction?

*Bur.* It was made  
And meant but as an wholesome warning to you :  
By your imprudence it became a pitfall.  
You saw the precipice which gap'd before you ;  
Yet, truly warn'd, you plung'd into the deep.  
You were confederate with Babington  
The traitor, and his murderous companions ;  
You knew of all, and with a steady plan  
Directed from your prison their black treason.

*Mary.* When did I that, my Lord? produce me  
then  
The documents.

*Bur.* Those you have seen already ;  
They were, before the court, presented to you.

*Mary.* They're copies, written by another hand :  
Shew me the ptoof that they were dictated  
By me, that they proceeded from my lips,  
And in those very terms in which you read them.

*Bur.* Before his execution, Babington  
Confess'd they were the same which he receiv'd.

*Mary.* Why was he in his life-time not produc'd



Before my face? Why was he then dispatch'd  
So quickly, that he could not be confronted  
With her whom he accus'd?

*Bur.* Besides, my Lady,  
Your secretaries, Curl and Nau, declare  
On oath, they are the very self-same letters,  
Which, from your lips, they faithfully transcrib'd.

*Mary.* And on my menial servants' testimony  
I am condemn'd; upon the word of those  
Who have betray'd me, *me*, their rightful Queen?  
Who in that very moment, when they came  
As witnesses against me, broke their faith?

*Bur.* You said yourself, you held your coun-  
tryman  
To be an upright conscientious man.

*Mary.* I thought him such; but 'tis the hour of  
danger  
Alone, which tries the virtue of a man.  
He ever was an honest man, but weak  
In understanding; and his subtle comrade,  
Whose faith, observe, I never answer'd for,  
Might easily seduce him to write down  
More than he should; the rack may have compell'd  
him

To say and to confess more than he knew.  
He hop'd to save himself by this false witness,  
And thought it could not injure *me*, a Queen.

*Bur.* The oath he swore was free and unconstrain'd.

*Mary.* But not before my face ! how now, my Lord,  
Those are two witnesses who still are living,  
Let them appear against me face to face !  
Let them repeat what they have testified !  
Why am I then denied that privilege,  
That right, which e'en the murderer enjoys ?  
I know from Talbot's mouth, my former keeper,  
That in this reign a statute has been pass'd,  
Which orders, that the plaintiff be confronted  
With the defendant ; is it so, Sir Knight ?  
I e'er have known you as an honest man,  
Now prove it to me ; tell me, on your conscience,  
If such a law exists, or not, in England ?

*Paul.* 'Tis so, my Lady ; that's the law in England ;  
I must declare the truth.

*Mary.* Well then, my Lord,  
If I am treated by the law of England  
So hardly, when that law oppresses me,  
Say, why avoid the law of this same land,  
When 'tis for my advantage ? Answer me ;

Why was not Babington confronted with me ?

Why not my servants, who are still both living ?

*Bur.* Be not so hasty, Lady ; 'tis not only  
Your plot with Babington——

*Mary.* 'Tis that alone  
Which arms the law against me ; that alone  
From which I'm call'd upon to clear myself.  
Stick to the point, my Lord ; evade it not.

*Bur.* It has been proved that you have corres-  
ponded

With the Ambassador of Spain, Mendoza——

*Mary.* Stick to the point, my Lord.

*Bur.* That you have form'd  
Conspiracies to overturn the fix'd  
Religion of the realm ; that you have call'd  
Into this kingdom foreign pow'rs, and rous'd  
All kings in Europe to a war with England.

*Mary.* And were it so, my Lord,—though 'tis  
not so——

But let's suppose it were so : I am kept  
Imprison'd here against all laws of nations.  
I came not into England sword-in-hand ;  
I came a fugitive ; and, in the arms  
Of my imperial kinswoman, I claim'd

The sacred rights of hospitality.

But violence oppress'd me, and prepar'd

Chains for me, where I vainly hop'd protection.

Say, is my conscience bound towards this realm?

Have I then duties to fulfil tow'rd England?

I should but exercise a sacred right,

Deriv'd from sad necessity, if I strove

To burst these fetters, to encounter might

With might, to move and stir up ev'ry state

In Europe, to unite for my protection.

Whatever in a rightful war is just

And loyal, 'tis my right to exercise :

Murder alone, the secret bloody deed,

My pride forbids me, and my honest mind ;

Murder would stain me, would dishonour me :

Dishonour me, I say my Lord ! but not condemn  
me ;

Not subject me to England's courts of justice ;

For 'tis not justice, 'tis but violence,

Which is the question between me and England.

Bur. [*significant.*] Talk not, my Lady, of the  
dreadful right

Of pow'r : 'tis seldom on the pris'ner's side.

Mary. I am the weak one ; she the mighty one :—

'Tis well, my Lord ; let her then use her pow'r ;  
 Let her then kill me : let me be the victim  
 Of her security : but let her then  
 Confess, that she has us'd her pow'r alone,  
 And not contaminate the name of justice.  
 Let her not borrow, from the laws, the sword  
 To rid her of her hated enemy :  
 Let her not clothe, in this religious garment,  
 The bloody daring of licentious might :  
 Let not these juggling tricks deceive the world.—

*[returning the verdict.]*

Though, she may murder me ; she cannot judge me :—  
 Let her no longer strive to join the fruits  
 Of vice, with virtue's fair and angel-seeming ;  
 But let her dare to seem the thing she is. *[Exit.]*

*Bur.* She scorns us, she defies us ! will defy us,  
 Ev'n at the scaffold's foot ; we cannot break  
 This haughty heart ! Did then the dreadful sentence  
 Surprise her ? Did you see her shed one tear,  
 Or even change her colour ? She implores not  
 Our mercy ; well she knows the wav'ring mind  
 Of Queen Elizabeth : our fears alone,  
 Inspire her courage.

*Paul.* Lord High Treasurer,

Take the pretext away which buoys it up,  
And you shall see this proud defiance vanish  
That very moment. I must say, my Lord,  
Irregularities have been admitted  
In these proceedings; Babington and Ballard  
Should have been brought, with her two secretaries;  
Before her, face to face.

*Bur.* No, Paulet, no!  
That was not to be risk'd; her influence  
Upon the human heart is too ascendant;  
Too strong the female empire of her tears.  
Her secretary, Curl, if brought before her,  
And call'd upon to speak the weighty word  
On which her life depends, would straight shrink  
back,

And fearfully revoke his own confession.

*Paul.* The foes of England then will fill the world  
With odious noises; the solemnity  
Of these proceedings, to the minds of all,  
Will bear the marks but of more daring outrage.

*Bur.* That is the greatest torment of our Queen,  
That she can never 'scape the blame. O God!  
Had but this lovely mischief died before  
She set her faithless foot on English ground.

*Paul.* Amen, say I!

*Bur.* Had sickness but consum'd her!

*Paul.* England had been secur'd from much misfortune.

*Bur.* And yet, if she had died in nature's course,  
The world would call us still her murderers.

*Paul.* 'Tis true, the world will think, in spite  
of us,

Whate'er it list.

*Bur.* Yet could it not be prov'd?  
And it would make less noise.

*Paul.* Why, let it make  
What noise it may; it is not clam'rous blame,  
'Tis righteous censure only, which can wound.

*Bur.* We know that holy justice cannot 'scape  
The voice of censure, and the public cry  
Is ever on the side of the unhappy :  
Envy pursues the laurell'd conqueror ;  
The sword of justice, which adorns the man,  
Is hateful in a woman's hand ; the world  
Will give no credit to a woman's justice,  
If woman is the victim. 'Tis in vain  
That we, the judges, speak what conscience dictates;  
*She* has the royal privilege of mercy ;

She *must* exert it : 'twere intolerable,  
Should she let justice take its full career.

*Paul.* And therefore——

*Bur.* Therefore should she live? O! no,  
She must not live; impossible! 'tis this,  
Ev'n this, my friend, which thus torments the Queen:  
This scares all slumber from her eye; I read  
Her soul's distracting contest on her brows;  
She fears to speak her wishes, yet her looks,  
Her silent looks, significantly ask,

“ Is there not one amongst my many servants

“ To save me from this sad alternative?

“ Must I then tremble in eternal fear

“ Upon my throne, or must I sacrifice

“ A Queen, my own relation, on the block?”

*Paul.* 'Tis even so; nor can it be avoided——

*Bur.* Well might it be avoided, thinks the Queen,  
If she had only more attentive servants.

*Paul.* How more attentive?

*Bur.* Such as could interpret

A silent mandate?

*Paul.* What? A silent mandate!

*Bur.* Who, when a pois'nous adder is deliver'd



Into their hands, would keep the treach'rous charge,  
As if it were a sacred precious jewel.

*Paul.* A precious jewel is the Queen's good name,  
And spotless reputation : good, my Lord,  
One cannot guard it with sufficient care.

*Bur.* When, out of Shrewsb'ry's hand, the Queen  
of Scots  
To Sir Amias Paulet's care was giv'n,  
The meaning was——

*Paul.* I hope to God, my Lord,  
The meaning was, to give the hardest charge  
Into the purest hands : my Lord, my Lord !  
By heav'ns, I had disdain'd this bailiff's office,  
Had I not thought the weighty service ask'd  
The vigilance of the best man in England.  
Let me not think I am indebted for it  
To any thing but my unblemish'd name.

*Bur.* Spread the report, she wastes ; grows sicker  
still,  
And sicker ; and expires at last in peace ;  
Thus will she perish in the world's rememb'rance,  
And your good name is pure.

*Paul.* But not my conscience.

*Bur.* Though you refuse us, Sir, your own assistance,

You will not, sure, prevent another's hand.

*Paul.* No murderer shall e'er approach her threshold,

Whilst she's protected by my household gods.

Her life's a sacred trust ; to me the head

Of Queen Elizabeth is not more sacred.

Ye are the judges ; judge, and break the staff ;

And when 'tis time, then let the carpenter,

With axe and saw appear, to build the scaffold.

My castle's portals shall be op'd to him,

The sheriff, and the executioners :

As yet, she is entrusted to my care ;

And, be assur'd, I will fulfill my trust.

She shall nor *do*, nor *suffer* what's unjust. [ *Exeunt.* ]

ACT II.

*Scene*—LONDON; A HALL IN THE PALACE OF WEST-MINSTER.

*The Earl of Kent, and Sir William Davison, meeting.*

DAVISON.

Is that my Lord of Kent? return'd already?

Is then the tourney, the carousal over?

*Kent.* How now? Were you not present at the tilt?

*Dav.* My office hinder'd me.

*Kent.* Why then, Sir Knight,  
You've lost the fairest shew which ever taste  
Devis'd, or graceful dignity perform'd :  
For beauty's virgin fortress was presented,  
As by *Desire* invested ; the Earl Marshall,  
The Lord High Admiral, and ten other knights,  
Belonging to the Queen, defended it,  
And France's Cavaliers led the attack.  
A herald march'd before the gallant troop,

And summon'd, in a madrigal, the fortress,  
 And from the walls the Chancellor replied;  
 And then th' artillery was play'd, and nosegays  
 Breathing delicious-essences, were shot  
 From neat field-pieces; but in vain, the storm  
 Was valiantly resisted, and *Desire*  
 Was forc'd, unwillingly, to raise the siege.

*Dav.* A sign of evil boding, good, my Lord,  
 For the French suitors.

*Kent.* Why, you know that this  
 Was but in sport; when the attack's in earnest,  
 The fortress will, no doubt, capitulate.

*Dav.* Believe you that? I never can believe it.

*Kent.* The hardest article of all is now  
 Arrang'd, and France consents. Anjou's Duke  
 Is satisfied to be allow'd to hold  
 His holy worship in a private chapel;  
 And openly he promises to honour  
 And to protect the realm's establish'd faith.  
 Had you but heard the bursts of satisfaction,  
 Which, as this news was publickly announc'd,  
 Through London's streets, in joyful shouts re-  
 sounded!

'Twas e'er their fear, that the good Queen might die,

Without immediate issue of her body,  
And England bear again the chains of Rome,  
If Mary Stuart should ascend the throne.

*Dav.* This fear appears superfluous ; she goes  
Into the bridal chamber ; Mary Stuart  
Enters the gates of death.

*Kent.* The Queen approaches.

*Enter Elizabeth, led in by Leicester, Count L' Aubespine,  
Bellievre, Lords Shrewsbury and Burleigh, with other  
French and English gentlemen.*

*Eliz.* [*to L' Aubespine.*] Count, I am sorry for these  
noblemen,

Whose gallant zeal hath brought them over sea  
To these our coasts, that they must miss, with us,  
The splendour of the court of St. Germain.

Such pompous festivals of godlike state

I cannot furnish, as the royal court

Of France : a sober and contented people,

Which crouds around me with a thousand blessings,

As often as I publicly appear :

*This* is the spectacle which I can shew,

And not without some pride, to foreign eyes.

The splendour of the noble ladies who  
 In Cath'rine's beauteous garden bloom, would serve  
 But to hide me, and my more modest merits.

*L'Aub.* The court of Westminster has but one  
 lady

To shew th' astonish'd stranger ; but whatever,  
 In the accomplish'd sex can charm the heart,  
 Is seen united in her single person.

*Bel.* Great majesty of England, suffer us  
 To take our leave, and to Anjou's Duke,  
 Our royal master, bear the happy news.  
 The hot impatience of his heart would not  
 Permit him to remain at Paris ; he  
 At Amiens awaits the joyful tidings ;  
 And far as Calais reach his posts, to bring  
 With winged swiftness the consent which, still  
 We hope, your royal lips will graciously  
 Pronounce, to his intoxicated ear.

*Eliz.* Press me no further now, Count Bellievre,  
 It is not now a time, and I repeat it,  
 To kindle here, the joyful marriage torch.  
 The heav'ns hang black and heavy o'er this land ;  
 The garb of mourning would become me better  
 Than the magnificence of bridal garments :

A fatal blow is aim'd against my heart;  
A blow which threatens to oppress my house.

*Bel.* Give us your promise only, gracious Queen;  
Let us not shape our course in desperation  
Homewards: let better days fulfill our hopes.

*Eliz.* Monarchs are but the slaves of their condition;  
They dare not hear the dictates of their hearts:  
My wish was ever to remain unmarried,  
And I had plac'd my greatest pride, my glory,  
In this, that it might be hereafter read  
Upon my tomb: "Here rests the virgin Queen."  
But yet my subjects will not this: they think,  
Ee'n now they often think upon the time,  
When I shall be no more: 'tis not enough,  
That blessings now are shower'd on this land,  
They ask a sacrifice for future blessings,  
And I must offer up my liberty,  
My virgin liberty, my sov'reign good,  
Unto my people's welfare, and a master  
Is thus impos'd upon me. 'Tis by this,  
I see, that I am nothing but a woman,  
In their regard; and yet I thought, that I,  
Had govern'd like a man, and like a king.  
Well wot I, that it is not serving God,

To quit the laws of nature, and that those  
 Who here have rul'd before me, merit praise;  
 That they have op'd the cloister-gates, and giv'n  
 Thousands of victims, of ill taught devotion,  
 Back to the duties of humanity.

But yet, a Queen, who hath not spent her days  
 In fruitless, idle contemplation ; who,  
 Without a murmur, indefatigable  
 Performs the hardest of all duties, *she*  
 Should be exempted, surely, from this law  
 Of nature, which commands, that the one half  
 Of human kind be subject to the other.

*L'Aub.* Great Queen, you have upon your throne  
 done honour

To ev'ry virtue ; nothing now remains,  
 But to the sex, whose greatest boast you are,  
 To be the leading star, and give the great  
 Example of its most appropriate duties.  
 'Tis true, the man exists not who deserves  
 That you should sacrifice your freedom to him ;  
 Yet can descent, and rank, and manly beauty,  
 With an heroic soul make mortal man  
 Deserving of this honour—

*Eliz.* Without doubt,



My Lord Ambassador, a marriage-union  
 With France's royal son would do me honour :  
 Yes, I acknowledge it without disguise,  
 If it must be, if I cannot prevent it,  
 If I must yield unto my peoples' prayers,  
 And much I fear, they will o'erpower me ;  
 I do not know in Europe, any prince,  
 To whom I'd sacrifice, with less reluctance,  
 My greatest treasure, my dear liberty.  
 Let this confession, satisfy your master.

*Bel.* It gives the *fairest* hope, and yet it gives  
 Nothing *but* hope ; my master wishes more.

*Eliz.* What wishes he ? [*she takes a ring from her  
 finger, and thoughtfully examines it.*] In this a  
 Queen has not

One privilege above all other women.  
 This common token hints at common duty,  
 And common servitude ; the ring denotes  
 Marriage, and 'tis of rings a chain is form'd.  
 Convey this present to his Highness ; 'tis,  
 As yet, no chain, it binds me not, as yet,  
 But it may, perhaps, become a link to bind me.

*Bel.* [*kneeling.*] This present, in his name, upon  
 my knees

I do receive, great Queen, and beg to press  
The kiss of homage on the gracious hand  
Which deigns to give it.

Eliz. [*to the Earl of Leicester, whom she, during the  
last speeches, had continually regarded.*]

By your leave, my Lord, [*she takes the blue ribbon from  
his neck,\* and invests Believre with it.*]

Invest his Highness with this ornament,  
As I invest you with it, and receive you  
Into the duties of my gallant order.  
And, "Honi soit qui mal y pense." Thus perish  
All jealousy between the two allies,  
And let the bond of confidence unite,  
Henceforth, the crowns of Britain and of France.

Bel. Most sov'reign Queen, this is a day of joy;  
O could it but be so for all, and that  
No sufferer might sorrow in this island.  
See! mercy beams upon thy brow; O! lady,  
Let the reflection of it's cheering light  
Fall on a wretched princess, who concerns  
Britain and France alike.

\* Till the time of Charles the First, the Knights of the Garter wore the blue ribbon with the George, about their necks, as they still do the collars, on great days. Translator.

*Eliz.* No further, Count;

Let us not mix two inconsistent things;  
If France desires in earnest my alliance;  
It must partake my cares; indeed, it must;  
Nor join in friendship with my foes.

*L' Aub.* It would

Act most unworthily, e'en in thy eyes,  
If it, in this alliance, should forget  
This hapless Queen, the widow of its king;  
In whose behalf, its honour and its faith  
Are bound to plead for grace.

*Eliz.* In this respect,

I know, as it becomes me, how to value  
This intercession; France therein fulfills,  
As a friend, his duties; and, he no doubt,  
Will now permit me too, to act as Queen.

*[she bows to the French Ambassadors, who, with the  
other gentlemen, retire respectfully.]*

*Enter Burleigh, Leicester, and Talbot. The Queen takes her seat.*

*Bur.* Illustrious sovereign, thou crown'st to day  
The fervent wishes of thy people : now  
We can rejoice in the propitious days  
Which thou bestow'st upon us; and we look  
No more with fear and trembling tow'rd the time  
Which, charg'd with storms, futurity presented.  
Now, but one only care disturbs this land;  
It is a sacrifice which ev'ry voice  
Demands; O! grant but this, and England's peace  
Will be establish'd now and evermore.

*Eliz.* What wish they still, my Lord? speak.

*Bur.* They demand  
The head of Mary Stuart;—if thou wilt  
Secure thy people in the high enjoyment  
Of liberty, and the fair light of truth,  
So lately and so dearly earn'd, then *she*  
Must be no more : if you will ease our minds  
Of these eternal fears for thy dear life,  
The enemy must fall : for well thou know'st,

That all thy Britons are not true alike :  
 Roman idolatry has still its friends  
 In secret, in this island, who foment  
 The hatred of our enemies : their hearts  
 All turn towards this Stuart ; they are leagu'd  
 With the two plotting brothers of Lorrain,  
 Th' invet'rate foes both of thy name and realm.  
 'Gainst thee this raging faction hath declar'd  
 A war of desolation, and they wage it  
 With the deceitful instruments of hell.  
 At Rheims, the Cardinal Archbishop's see,  
*There* is the arsenal, from which they dart  
 These light'nings ; *there's* the school of regicide ;  
*Thence*, in a thousand shapes disguis'd, are sent  
 Their secret missionaries to this island ;  
 Their bold and daring zealots ; for from *thence*,  
 Have we not beheld the third assassin,  
 And inexhausted is the direful breed  
 Of secret enemies in *this* abyss.

And there in Fotheringhay Castle sits  
 The *Até*\* of this everlasting war,

\* The picture of Até, the Goddess of Mischief, we are acquainted with from Homer, *Il. v. 91. 130. 1. 501.* She is a daughter of Jupiter, and eager to prejudice every one, even the immortal gods. She counteracted Jupiter himself, on which

Who, with the torch of love, spreads flames around ;  
 For her, who flatters each with the fair hope  
 Of once possessing her ; for her it is,  
 That love-intoxicated youth devotes  
 Itself to certain death ; her rescue is  
 The watch-word, and to place her on thy throne  
 The aim ; for this accurs'd house of Lorraine  
 Denies thy sacred right ; to them thou art  
 A robber of the throne, and crown'd by fortune.  
 By them this silly woman was deluded,  
 Proudly to call herself the Queen of England :  
 There is no peace with her, and with her house ;  
 Their hatred is too bloody, their offences  
 Too heavy ; thou must either act, or suffer ;—  
 Her life is death to thee, her death thy life.

account he seized her by her beautiful hair, and hurl'd her from  
 heaven to the earth, where she, now striding over the heads of  
 men, excites them to evil, in order to involve them in calamity.

*Herder*

Shakspeare has, in Julius Cæsar, made a fine use of this image :

“ And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,  
 “ With Até by his side, come hot from hell,  
 “ Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,  
 “ Cry havock, and let slip the dogs of war.”

I need not point out to the reader, the beautiful propriety of introducing this evil spirit on this occasion.

*Translator.*

*Eliz.* My Lord, your bear a melancholy office;  
I know the purity which guides your zeal,  
Know too that unadulterated wisdom  
Informs you ; yet this wisdom, when it calls  
For blood, I hate it in my inmost soul.  
Think of a milder counsel.—Good, my Lord  
Of Shrewsbury, now give us your opinion.

*Tal.* Desire you but to know, most gracious  
Queen,

What is for your advantage, then I have  
Nought to add to what my Lord High Treas'rer  
Has urg'd ; for your welfare, let the sentence  
Be then confirm'd,—this is prov'd already.  
There is no surer method to avert  
The danger from your head, and from the state.  
If you'll not be advis'd concerning this,  
You can dismiss your council. We are plac'd  
Here as your counsellors, but to consult  
The welfare of this land, and with our knowledge,  
With our experience, are we bound to serve you!  
But, what is good and just: for this, my Queen  
You have no need of counsellors, your conscience  
Knows it full well, and it is written there.

Nay it were overstepping our commission  
If we attempted to instruct you in it.

*Eliz.* Yet speak, my worthy Lord of Shrews-  
bury,

'Tis not our frail understanding alone,  
Our heart too feels it wants some sage advice.

*Tal.* Well did you praise the upright zeal which  
fires

Lord Burleigh's loyal breast ; my bosom too,  
Although my tongue be not so eloquent,  
Beats with no weaker, no less faithful pulse :  
Long may you live, my Queen, to be the joy  
Of your delighted people, to prolong  
Peace and its envied blessings to this realm.  
This island never saw so happy days  
Since it was govern'd by its native kings.  
O let it never purchase its advantage  
With its good name ; at least, may Talbot's eyes  
Be clos'd, e'er this shall happen.

*Eliz.* God forbid  
That we should ever sully our good name.

*Tal.* If so, you must adopt some other mean  
To save these kingdoms, for the execution  
Of Mary Stuart is an unjust mean.



You cannot upon her pronounce a sentence,  
Who is not subject to you.

*Eliz.* Then, it seems,  
My council and my parliament have err'd;  
Each bench of justice in this land's in error,  
Which gave me, with one voice, this sov'reign right.

*Tal.* [*after a pause.*] The proof of justice lies not  
in the voice

Of numbers; England's not the world, nor is  
Thy parliament the focus, which collects  
The vast opinion of the human race.

This present England is no more the future,  
Than 'tis the past; as inclination changes  
Thus ever ebbs and flows th' unstable tide  
Of public judgment. Say not then, that thou  
Must act as stern necessity compels thee,  
That thou must yield to the importunate  
Petitions of thy people;—ev'ry moment  
Thou can'st experience that thy will is free.

Attempt it, and declare, that thou hatest  
Blood; that thou wilt protect thy sister's life;  
Shew those who wish to give thee other counsels,  
That *here* thy royal anger is not feign'd,  
And thou shalt see how quick necessity

Can vanish, and what was titled justice  
 Into injustice be converted : thou  
 Thyself must judge, and thou alone: thou can'st not  
 Lean on this feeble trembling reed, then follow  
 The gracious dictates of thy tender heart.  
 Hath not God planted rigour in the frame  
 Of woman ; and the founders of this realm,  
 Who to the female hand have not denied  
 The reins of government, seem to intend  
 Thereby, that rigour should not be the boon  
 By which the kings of England should be known.

*Eliz.* Lord Shrewsbury's a fervent advocate  
 For mine, and England's enemy ; I must  
 Prefer those counsellors who wish *my* welfare.

*Tal.* Her advocates have an invidious task !  
 None will, by speaking in her favour, venture  
 To meet thy anger : suffer then, an old  
 And faithful counsellor, (whom nought on earth  
 Can tempt, on the grave's brink,) to exercise  
 The pious duty of humanity.  
 It never shall be said, that, in thy council,  
 Passion and interest have giv'n their votes,  
 And that 'twas mercy only which was silent:—  
 All circumstances have conspir'd against her ;

Thou ne'er hast seen her face, and nothing speaks,  
Within thy bosom, for the foreigner.

I do not take the part of her misdeeds;

They say she plann'd her husbands murder : true

It is, that she espous'd his murderer.

A grievous crime it was ; but then it happen'd

In a distressful, gloomy moment ; in

The anxious agony of civil war,

Where she, the weak one, saw herself surrounded

By disrespectful and impetuous vassals,

And sought her refuge in the rude embrace

Of him who seem'd the bravest and the strongest.

God knows what arts were us'd to overcome her !

For woman is a weak and fragile being.

*Eliz.* Woman's not weak ; there are heroic souls

Among the sex ; and, in my presence, Lord,

I do forbid to speak of woman's weakness.

*Tal.* Misfortune was for thee a rigid school ;

Thou wast not station'd on the sunny side

Of life ; thou saw'st no throne, from far, before thee ;

The grave was gaping for thee at thy feet.

At Woodstock 'twas, and in the tower's night,

'Twas *there* the gracious father of this land

Taught thee to know thy duty, from misfortune.

No flatt'rer sought thee there; there learn'd thy soul,  
 Free from the noisy world and its distractions,  
 To commune with itself, to think apart,  
 And estimate the real goods of life.  
 No God protected this poor suff'rer:  
 Transplanted in her early youth, and yet  
 A tender child, to France, she saw the reign  
 Of levity and inconsiderate folly;  
 There, in the court of constant dissipation,  
 She never heard the earnest voice of truth;  
 She was deluded by the glare of vice,  
 And driven onward by the stream of ruin.  
 Her's was the vain possession of a face,  
 And blooming she outshone all other women,  
 Not less in beauty, than in noble birth.

*Eliz.* Collect yourself, my Lord of Shrewsbury;  
 Think that we here in solemn council sit.  
 Those charms must surely be without compare,  
 Which can engender, in an elder's blood,  
 Such fire. My Lord of Leicester, you alone  
 Are silent; does the subject which has made  
 Him eloquent, deprive you of your speech?

*Lei.* Amazement ties my tongue, my Queen, to  
 think

That they should fill thy ears with such alarms,  
 And that the idle tales, which, in the streets  
 Of London, terrify the cred'lous people,  
 Should reach th' enlighten'd circle of thy council,  
 And occupy, in earnest, men of wisdom.  
 Astonishment possesses me, I own,  
 To think this lackland Queen of Scotland, she  
 Who could not save her own poor throne, the jest  
 Of her own vassals, and her country's refuse,  
 Who, in her fairest days of freedom, was  
 But thy despised puppet, should become  
 At once thy terror, when a prisoner.  
 What, in the name of God, can make her fearful?  
 Is't that she claims these kingdoms; that the Guises  
 Will not acknowledge thee as Queen? Did then  
 Thy people's loyal fealty await  
 These Guises' approbation? can these Guises,  
 With their objections, ever shake the right  
 Which birth hath giv'n thee; which, with one con-  
 sent,  
 The votes of parliament have ratified?  
 And is not she, by Henry's will, pass'd o'er  
 In silence? is it probable that England,  
 As yet so bless'd in the new light's enjoyment,

Should throw itself into this papist's arms?  
 From thee, the sov'reign it adores, desert  
 To Darnley's murd'ress ! What will they then,  
 These urgent men, who e'en in thy lifetime  
 Torment thee with a successor; who think  
 They cannot soon enough dispose of thee  
 In marriage, to deliver church and state?  
 Stand'st thou not blooming there in youthful prime,  
 While each step leads her tow'ards th'expecting tomb?  
 By heav'ns, I hope thou wilt full many a year  
 Walk o'er her grave; and that without becoming,  
 Thyself, the instrument of her sad end.

*Bur.* Lord Leicester hath not always held this  
 tone.

*Lei.* 'Tis true, I in the court of justice gave  
 My verdict for her death; here, in the council,  
 I can consistently speak otherwise:  
 Here, right is not the question, but advantage.  
 Is this a time for dread of her, when France,  
 Her only succour, has abandon'd her?  
 When thou preparest with thy hand to bless  
 The royal son of France, when the fair hope  
 Of a new, glorious stem of sovereigns  
 Begins again to blossom in this land?

Why hasten then her death ? She's dead already.  
 Contempt for her's the only death ; let not  
 Ill tim'd compassion call her into life.  
 'Tis therefore my advice to leave the sentence,  
 By which her life is forfeit, in full force.  
 Let her then live ; but let her trembling live  
 Beneath the axe, and, from the very hour  
 One arm be lifted for her, let it fall.

Eliz. [*rises.*] My Lords, I now have heard your  
 sev'ral thoughts,  
 And give you my best thanks for this your zeal,  
 With God's assistance, who the hearts of kings  
 Illumines, I will weigh your arguments,  
 And choose what seems to me the best.  
 My Lord [*to Burleigh.*]  
 High Treasurer, your honest fears, I know it,  
 Are but the offspring of your faithful care ;  
 But yet, my Lord of Leicester has said well ;—  
 There is no need of haste ; our enemy  
 Hath lost already her most dangerous sting,—  
 The mighty arm of France : the fear that she  
 Might quickly be the victim of their zeal  
 Will curb the blind impatience of her friends.

*Enter Sir Amias Paulet, and Mortimer.*

*Eliz.* There's Sir Amias Paulet; noble Sir,  
What bring you us?

*Paul.* Most gracious Sovereign,  
My nephew, who but lately is return'd  
From foreign travel, kneels before thy feet,  
And offers thee his earliest homage.  
Grant him thy royal grace, and let him grow  
And flourish in the sunshine of thy favour.

*Mort.* [*kneeling on one knee.*] Long live my royal  
mistress! happiness,  
And glory form a crown to grace her brows!

*Eliz.* Arise, Sir Knight; and welcome here in  
England;  
You've made, I hear, the tour, have been in France  
And Rome, and tarried too some time at Rheims:  
Tell me then, what our enemies are spinning.

*Mort.* May God confound them all! and may the  
darts  
Which they are aiming at my Sovereign,  
Recoiling, strike their own perfidious breasts!



*Eliz.* Saw you Morgan, and the wily Bishop  
Of Ross?—

*Mort.* My Queen, I saw all Scottish exiles,  
Who forge at Rheims their plots against this isle.  
I stole into their confidence, in hopes  
To learn what mischief they were brooding o'er.

*Paul.* Private dispatches they entrusted to him,  
In cyphers, for the Queen of Scots, which he,  
With loyal hand, hath given up to us.

*Eliz.* Say, what are then their latest plans of trea-  
son?

*Mort.* It struck them, as it were a thunderbolt,  
That France should leave them, and with England  
close

This firm alliance; now they turn their hopes  
Tow'ards Spain——

*Eliz.* This, Walsingham hath written us.

*Mart.* Besides, a bull, which from the Vatican  
Pope Sixtus lately levell'd at thy throne,  
Arriv'd at Rheims, as I was leaving it:—  
With the next ship, we may expect it here.

*Lei.* England no more is frighten'd by such arms.

*Bur.* They're always dangerous in bigots' hands.

Eliz. [*looking stedfastly at Mortimer.*] Your enemies  
have said, that you frequented  
The schools at Rheims, and have abjur'd your faith.

Mort. 'Tis true, I seem'd to do so; I cannot  
Deny it; thus far went my zeal to serve thee.

Eliz. [*to Paulet, who presents papers to her.*] What  
have you there?

Paul. It is from Lady Stuart,  
'Tis a petition, and to thee address'd.

Bur. [*hastily catching at it.*] Give me the letter.

Paul. [*giving it to the Queen.*] By your leave, my  
Lord

High Treasurer; the lady order'd me  
To bring it to her Majesty's own hands.  
She says, I am her enemy; I am  
Only the enemy of her offences,  
And that which is consistent with my duty  
I will, and readily, oblige her in.

[*The Queen takes the letter: as she reads it, Mortimer and Leicester speak some words in private.*]

Bur. [*to Paulet.*] What may the contents of the  
letter be?

Idle complaints, from which one ought to screen  
The Queen's too tender heart.

*Paul.* What it contains  
She did not hide from me ; she begs a boon ;  
She begs to be admitted to the grace  
Of speaking with the Queen.

*Bur.* It cannot be.

*Tal.* Why not ? Her supplication's not unjust.

*Bur.* For her, the base encourager of murder ;  
Her, who hath thirsted for our sov'reign's blood,  
The privilege to see the royal presence  
Is forfeited : a faithful counsellor  
Can never give this treacherous advice.

*Tal.* And if the Queen is gracious, Sir, are you  
The man to hinder pity's soft emotions ?

*Bur.* She is condemn'd ; her hated head now lies  
Beneath the axe, and it would ill become  
The Queen to see a death-devoted head.  
The sentence cannot have its execution  
If the Queen's Majesty approaches her,  
For pardon e'er attends the royal presence,  
As sickness flies the health-dispensing hand.

*Eliz.* [*having read the letter, dries her tears.*]

O ! what is man ! what is the boast of earth !  
To what extremities is she reduc'd  
Who with such proud and splendid hopes began !

Who, call'd to sit on the most ancient throne  
 Of Christendom, misled by vain ambition,  
 Hop'd with a triple Crown to deck her brows!  
 How is her language alter'd, since the time  
 When she assum'd the arms of England; when  
 She from her flatterers enjoy'd the title  
 Of Sov'reign of the two Britannic isles.  
 Forgive me, Lords, my heart is cleft in twain,  
 Anguish possesses me, and my soul bleeds  
 To think that earthly goods are so unstable,  
 And that the dreadful fate which rules mankind  
 Should threaten mine own house, and scowl so near me.

*Tal.* O, Queen! the God of mercy hath inform'd  
 Your heart; O! hearken to this heav'nly guidance.  
 Most grievously, indeed, hath she aton'd  
 Her grievous crime, and it is time that now,  
 At last, her heavy penance have an end.  
 Stretch forth your hand, tow'rds her who's fall'n so  
 low,

And, like the luminous vision of an angel,  
 Descend into her jail's sepulchral night.

*Bur.* Be stedfast, mighty Queen; let no emotion  
 Of seeming laudable humanity

Mislead thee ; take not from thyself the pow'r  
Of acting as necessity commands.

Thou *canst* not pardon her, thou *canst* not save her :  
Then heap not on thyself the odious blame,  
That thou, with cruel and contemptuous triumph,  
Didst glut thyself with gazing on thy victim.—

*Lei.* Let us, my Lords, remain within our bounds ;  
The Queen is wise, and doth not need our counsels,  
To lead her to the most becoming choice ;  
This meeting of the Queens hath nought in common  
With the proceedings of the Court of Justice.  
The law of England, not the monarch's will,  
Condemns the Queen of Scotland, and 'twere worthy  
Of the great soul of Queen Elizabeth,  
To follow the soft dictates of her heart,  
Though justice swerve not from its rigid path.

*Eliz.* Retire, my Lords.—We shall perhaps find  
means

T'unite as fitting what compassion asks,  
And what necessity imposes on us.  
And now retire—

[*the Lords retire : she calls Sir Edward Mortimer back.*  
Sir Edward Mortimer !

*Elizabeth, Mortimer.*

*Eliz.* [*Having measured him for some time, with her eyes, in silence.*] You've shewn a spirit of Advent'rous courage,

And, for your years, uncommon self-command :

Who practices so soon dissimulation's

Hard lessons, is a man before the time,

And shortens his probationary years.

Fate calls you to a lofty scene of action ;

I prophecy it, and can, happily

For you, fulfil, myself, my own prediction.

*Mort.* Illustrious mistress, what I am, and what I can perform, 's devoted to your service.

*Eliz.* You've made acquaintance with the foes of England.

Their hate to me is unappeasable ;

Their bloody machinations unexhausted.

As yet, indeed, Almighty Providence

Hath shielded me, but on my brows the crown

For ever trembles, while *she* lives who fans

Their bigot-zeal, and nourishes their hopes.

*Mort.* She lives no more, as soon as you command  
it.

*Eliz.* O Sir! I thought I saw my labour's end,  
And I am come no farther than at first.  
I wish'd to let the laws of England act,  
And keep my own hands pure from blood's defile-  
ment.

The sentence is pronounc'd—what gain I by it?  
It must be executed, Mortimer,  
And I must authorize the execution.  
The blame will ever light on me, I must  
Own it, and cannot save appearances.  
That is the worst—

*Mort.* But can appearances  
Disturb your mind, in the good cause of justice?

*Eliz.* You are unpractis'd in the world, Sir Knight;  
What we appear, is subject to the judgment  
Of all mankind, and what we are, of no man.  
No one will be convinc'd that I am right,  
I must take care that my connivance in  
Her death at least be wrapp'd in endless doubt.  
In deeds of such uncertain double visage  
Security is only found in darkness.

The worst step's that what one acknowledges,  
And what is not abandon'd, is not lost.

Mort. [*seeking to learn his meaning.*] Then it were  
perhaps the best—

Eliz. [*quick.*] Aye, surely were it.  
The best ; O Sir, my better angel speaks  
Through you ;—go on then, worthy Sir, conclude ;  
You are in earnest, you examine deep,  
Have quite a diff'rent spirit from your uncle's.

Mort. [*surprised.*] Did you discover to the Knight  
your wish ?

Eliz. I am sorry that I did—

Mort. Excuse his age,  
The old man is grown scrupulous ; such bold  
Adventures ask the enterprizing courage  
Of youth—

Eliz. And may I venture then on *you*—

Mort. My hand I'll lend thee ; save then as thou canst  
Thy reputation—

Eliz. Yes, Sir ; if you could  
But waken me some morning with this news :—  
“ Maria Stuart, your blood-thirsty foe,  
“ Breath'd yesternight her last”—



*Mort.* Depend on me.

*Eliz.* When shall my head lie down in peace to sleep ?

*Mort.* Thy fears be ended with the next new moon.

*Eliz.* And be the self-same happy day the dawn  
Of your preferment—so God speed you, Sir ;  
And be not hurt, if chance my thankfulness  
Should wear the mask of darkness.—Silence is  
The happy suitor's god—the closest bonds,  
The dearest, are the work of secrecy. [Exit.

*Mortimer.* [alone.]

Go, false deceitful Queen ! as thou deludest  
The world, e'en so delude I thee ;—'tis right,  
Thus to betray thee ; 'tis a worthy action.  
Look I then like a murderer ? hast thou  
Read on my brow such base dexterity ?  
Trust only to *my* arm, and keep thine own  
Back, and assume the pious outward side  
Of mercy 'fore the world, the while thou reckon'st  
In secret on my murd'rous aid ; and thus  
We shall, by gaining time, ensure her rescue.

Thou wilt exalt me !—shew'st significant,  
 From far a costly prize ; and even were  
 Thyself the prize, and all thy woman's favour,  
 What art thou, poor one, and what canst thou  
     proffer ?

I scorn ambition's avaricious strife,  
 With *her* alone 's the charm of life ;  
 O'er *her*, in rounds of endless glory, hover  
 Spirits with grace, and youth eternal bless'd ;  
 Celestial joy is thron'd upon her breast.  
 Thou hast but earthly, mortal goods to offer—  
 That sov'reign good, for which all else be slighted,  
 When heart in heart, delighting and delighted ;  
 Together flow in sweet forgetfulness ;—  
 Ne'er did'st thou woman's fairest crown possess,  
 Ne'er hast thou with thy hand an husband's hand  
     requited.

—I must attend Lord Leicester, and deliver  
 Her letter to him—'tis a hateful charge—  
 I have no confidence in this court puppet—  
 I can effect her rescue, I alone ;  
 Be danger, honour, and the prize my own.

*[as he is going, Paulett meets him.]*

*Mortimer, Paulett.*

*Paul.* What said the Queen to you?—

*Mort.* 'Twas nothing, Sir ;

Nothing of consequence—

*Paul.* [*looking at him earnestly.*] Hear, Mortimer !  
It is a false and slipp'ry ground on which  
You tread—the grace of princes is alluring,  
Youth is ambitious—let not your ambition  
Betray you.—

*Mort.* Did not then yourself present me  
At court?—

*Paul.* O, would to God I had not done it !  
The honour of *our* house was never gather'd  
In courts—stand fast my nephew—purchase not  
Too dear, nor sully with a crime your conscience.

*Mort.* What are these fears ? What are you dream-  
ing of ?

*Paul.* How high soe'er the Queen may promise you  
To raise you, trust not her alluring words.  
The spirit of the world's a lying spirit,  
And vice is a deceitful, treach'rous friend.

She will deny you, if you listen to her ;  
And, to preserve her own good name, will punish  
The bloody deed, which she herself commanded.

*Mort.* The bloody deed !—

*Paul.* Away, dissimulation !—

I know the deed, the Queen propos'd to you.  
She hopes that your ambitious youth will be  
More docile than my rigid age ; but say,  
Have you then pledg'd your promise, have you ?—

*Mort.* Uncle !

*Paul.* If you have done so, I abandon you,  
And lay my curse upon you.—

*Lei.* [*entering.*] Worthy Sir !

I with your nephew wish a word ;—the Queen  
Is graciously inclin'd towards him ; she  
Wills that the person of the Lady Stuart,  
Be unconditionally unto him  
Entrusted—she depends upon his honour.

*Paul.* Depends ?—'tis well—

*Lei.* What say you, Sir ?

*Paul.* The Queen

Depends on him ; and I, my Lord, depend  
Upon myself, and my two open eyes, [Exit.

*Leicester, Mortimer.*

*Lei.* [*surprised.*] What ail'd the Knight?

*Mort.* My Lord, I cannot tell,  
What angers him:—the confidence, perhaps,  
The Queen so suddenly confers upon me.

*Lei.* Are you deserving then of confidence?

*Mort.* This question would I put to you, Lord  
Leicester.

*Lei.* You said you wish'd to speak with me in  
private.

*Mort.* Assure me first, that I may venture it.

*Lei.* Who gives me an assurance on your side?  
Let not my want of confidence offend you;  
I see you, Sir, exhibit at this court  
Two different aspects; one of them *must* be  
A borrow'd one; but which of them is real?

*Mort.* These self-same doubts I have concerning  
you.

*Lei.* Which then, shall pave the way to confidence?

*Mort.* He who, by doing it, is least in danger.

*Lei.* Well, that are you—

*Mort.* No, you;—the evidence  
Of such a weighty, powerful peer as you  
Can overwhelm my voice—my accusation.  
Is feeble 'gainst your rank, and 'gainst your favour.

*Lei.* Sir, you mistake ; in ev'ry thing but this  
I'm pow'rful here ; but in this tender point,  
Which I am call'd upon to trust you with,  
I am the weakest man of all the court,  
And a poor testimony can undo me.

*Mort.* If the all-pow'rful Earl of Leicester deigns  
To stoop so low to meet me, and to make  
Such a confession to me, I may venture  
To think a little better of myself,  
And go in magnanimity before him.

*Lei.* Lead you the way of confidence, I'll follow.

*Mort.* [*producing suddenly the letter.*] Here is a  
Letter from the Quèen of Scotland.

*Lei.* [*alarm'd, catches hastily at the letter.*] Speak  
softly, Sir !—what see I ?—Oh, it is

Her picture !—

[*kisses and examines it with speechless joy.—a pause.—*]

*Mort.* [*who has not lost sight of him the whole time.*]

Now, my Lord, I can believe you.

*Lei.* [*having hastily run through the letter.*] You  
know the contents of the letter, Sir?

*Mort.* Not I.—

*Lei.* Indeed! She surely hath inform'd you—

*Mort.* Nothing hath she inform'd me of:—She said  
You would explain this riddle to me—'tis  
To me a riddle, that the Earl of Leicester,  
The far-fam'd fav'rite of Elizabeth,  
The open, bitter enemy of Mary,  
And one of those who spoke her mortal sentence,  
Should be the man, from whom the Queen, in thral-  
dom,  
Expects deliv'rance—yet it must be so;  
Your eyes express too plainly, what your heart  
Feels for the hapless lady.—

*Lei.* Tell me, Sir;

First, how it comes that you should take so warm  
An int'rest in her fate; and what it was  
Gain'd you her confidence?—

*Mort.* My Lord, I can,  
And in few words, explain this mystery.  
I lately have at Rome abjur'd my errors,  
And stand in correspondence with the Guises.

A letter from the Cardinal Archbishop  
Was my credential with the Queen of Scots.

*Lei.* I am acquainted, Sir, with your conversion ;  
'Twas that which wak'd my confidence towards you.  
Each remnant of distrust be henceforth banish'd ;  
Your hand, Sir, and forgive me what is pass'd.—  
I cannot use enough precaution here.  
Burleigh and Walsingham, I know it, hate me,  
And, watching me, in secret spread their nets :  
You might have been their instrument, their creature,  
To lure me to their toils.—

*Mort.* What little steps  
So great a nobleman is forc'd to take  
At court !—my Lord, I pity you.—

*Lei.* With joy  
I rest upon the faithful breast of friendship ;  
Where I can ease me of this long constraint.  
You seem surpris'd, Sir, that my heart is turn'd  
So suddenly towards the captive Queen.  
In truth, I never hated her ;—the time's  
Necessity made me her adversary ;—  
She was intended for me long ago,  
You know it, ere she gave her hand to Darnley,



While yet the beams of glory smil'd around her.  
 Then did I coldly push this blessing from me;—  
 Now in confinement, at the gates of death,  
 I claim her, at the hazard of my life.

*Mort.* That looks magnanimous, my Lord—

*Lei.* The state  
 Of circumstances, since that time, is chang'd.  
 'Twas my ambition blunted all my feelings  
 'Gainst youth and beauty.—Mary's hand I held  
 Too insignificant for me;—I hoped  
 To be the husband of the Queen of England.

*Mort.* It is notorious, that she preferr'd you  
 Before all others.

*Lei.* So it seem'd, Sir ; yet  
 Now, after ten lost years of tedious courtship,  
 And hateful self-constraint—O, Sir, my heart  
 Must ease itself of this long agony.—  
 They call me happy !—did they only know  
 What the chains are, for which they envy me !  
 When I had sacrificed ten bitter years  
 To the proud idol of her vanity ;  
 Submitted with a slave's humility  
 To ev'ry change of her despotic fancies ;

The plaything of her little, humoursome,  
 Capricious wilfulness ; now by her love  
 Caress'd, and now, with prudish pride, rejected ;  
 Alike tormented by her grace and rigour :  
 Watch'd like a pris'ner by the Argus-eyes  
 Of jealousy ; examin'd like a school-boy,  
 And rail'd at like a servant.—O, no tongue  
 Can paint this hell !—

*Mort.* My Lord, I feel for you.—

*Lei.* To lose, and at the very goal, the prize!—  
 Another comes to rob me of the fruits  
 Of my so anxious wooing.—I must lose  
 To her young blooming husband all those rights  
 Of which I was so long in full possession ;  
 And I must from the stage descend, where I  
 So long have play'd the most distinguish'd part.  
 Not of her hand alone, this envious stranger,  
 Threatens to rob me of her favour too ;  
 She is a woman, and he's form'd to please.

*Mort.* He is the son of Cath'rine—he has learnt,  
 In a good school, the arts of flattery.

*Lei.* Thus fall my hopes ;—I strove to seize a  
 plank

To bear me in this shipwreck of my fortunes,  
And my eye turn'd itself tow'rd the fair hope  
Of former days once more; then Mary's image  
Within me was renew'd; and youth and beauty  
Once more asserted all their former rights.

No more 'twas cold ambition; 'twas my heart  
Which now compar'd, and with regret I felt  
The value of the jewel I had lost.

With horror I beheld her in the depths  
Of misery, cast down by my transgression;  
Then wak'd the hope in me, that I might still  
Deliver and possess her; I contriv'd  
To send her, through a faithful hand, the news  
Of my conversion to her interests;  
And in this letter which you brought me, she  
Assures me that she pardons me, and offers  
Herself as guerdon, if I rescue her.—

*Mort.* But you attempted nothing for her rescue.  
You suffer'd patiently her condemnation;  
You gave, yourself, your verdict for her death;  
A miracle must happen, and the light  
Of truth must move me, *me*, her keeper's nephew,  
And Heav'n must, in the Vatican at Rome,

Prepare for her an unexpected succour,  
Else had she never found the way to you.

*Lei.* O, Sir! it has tormented me enough!  
About this time it was, that they remov'd her  
From Talbot's castle, and deliver'd her  
Up to your uncle's stricter custody.  
Each way to her was shut.—I was oblig'd,  
Before the world, to persecute her still;  
But do not think that I would patiently  
Have seen her led to death.—No, Sir; I hop'd,  
And I hope still, to ward off all extremes,  
Till I can find some certain mean to save her.

*Mort.* That is already found: my Lord of Leicester,  
Your gen'rous confidence in me, deserves  
A like return.—I will deliver her—  
That is my object here—my dispositions  
Are made already, and your pow'rful aid,  
Assures us of success in our attempt.

*Lei.* What say you?—you alarm me—how?—  
you would—

*Mort.* I'll open forcibly her prison-gates:—  
I have confederates, and all is ready.—

*Lei.* You have confederates, accomplices?

Alas ! in what rash enterprizes would you

Engage me ? and these friends, know they *my* secret ?

*Mort.* Fear not ; our plan was laid without your  
help,

Without your help it would have been accomplish'd,

Had she not signified her resolution

To owe to you alone her liberty.

*Lei.* And can you then, with certainty, assure me,

That in your plot my name has not been mention'd.

*Mort.* You may depend upon it—how, my Lord,

So scrupulous when help is offer'd you?

You wish to rescue Mary, and possess her ;

You find confed'rates ; sudden, unexpected

The readiest means fall, as if it were from Heav'n,

Yet you shew more perplexity than joy.

*Lei.* We must avoid all violence ; it is

Too dangerous an enterprize.—

*Mort.* Delay

Is also dangerous—

*Lei.* I tell you, Sir,

'Tis not to be attempted—

*Mort.* 'Tis, my Lord,

Too hazardous for *you* who would possess her ;

But *we*, who only wish to rescue her,  
*We* are more bold.

*Lei.* Young man, you are too hasty  
 In such a thorny, dangerous attempt.

*Mort.* And you too scrupulous in honour's cause.

*Lei.* I see the trammels that are spread around us.

*Mort.* And I feel courage to break through them all.

*Lei.* Fool-hardiness and madness, is this courage.

*Mort.* This prudence is not bravery, my Lord.

*Lei.* You surely wish to end like Babington.

*Mort.* You not to imitate great Norfolk's virtue.

*Lei.* Norfolk did never win the bride he woo'd.

*Mort.* But yet he prov'd himself deserving of it.

*Lei.* If *we* are ruin'd, she must fall with us.

*Mort.* If *we* risk nothing, she will ne'er be rescued.

*Lei.* You will not weigh the matter, hear not ; will  
 With blind and hasty violence destroy,  
 What was already in so fair a way.

*Mort.* Yes, sure, the way is fair, which you have  
 made !—

What have *you* done then to deliver her ?

And how, if I were miscreant enough

To *murder* her, as was propos'd to me

This moment by Elizabeth, and which  
She looks upon as certain, only name  
The measures *you* have taken to protect her?

*Lei.* Did the Queen give you then this bloody  
order?

*Mort.* She was deceiv'd in me, as Mary is  
In you.—

*Lei.* And have you promis'd it ; say, have you?

*Mort.* That she might not engage another's hand,  
I offer'd mine.—

*Lei.* Well done, Sir,—that was right ;—  
This perhaps may give us room, for she relies  
Upon your bloody service, and the sentence  
Is unfulfill'd the while, and we gain time.

*Mort.* [*angry.*] No we are losing time.—

*Lei.* The Queen depends  
On you, and will the readier make a shew  
Of mercy—perhaps I may prevail on her  
To give an audience to her adversary ;  
This step, consents she to it, ties her hands :  
Yes ! I will try it, will strain ev'ry nerve.—

*Mort.* And what is gain'd by this ? when she  
discovers

That I am cheating her, that Mary lives ;  
 Are we not where we were ? She never will  
 Be free ; the mildest lot which can await her  
 At best, is but perpetual confinement.  
 A daring deed must end the matter ; why  
 Will you not rather then begin with one ?  
 The pow'r is in your hands, would you but rouse  
 The might of your dependants round about  
 Your many castles, 'twere an host ; and still  
 Has Mary many secret friends : the Howards'  
 And Percies' noble houses, though their chiefs  
 Be fall'n, are rich in heroes ; they but wait  
 For the example of some potent lord.—  
 Away with feigning—act an open part,  
 And, like a loyal knight, protect your fair one ;  
 Fight a good fight for her ;—you know you are  
 Lord of the person of the Queen of England,  
 Whene'er you will :—invite her to your castle,  
 Oft hath she thither follow'd you—then shew  
 That you're a man—then speak as master—keep her  
 Confin'd till she release the Queen of Scots.

*Lei.* I am astonish'd—I am terrified !—  
 Where would your giddy madness hurry you !



Are you acquainted with this country?—know you  
The deeps and shallows of this court? with what  
A potent spell this female sceptre binds  
And rules the vanquish'd spirits? 'tis in vain  
You seek th' heroic energy which once  
Was active in this land?—it is subdued,  
A woman holds it under lock and key,  
And ev'ry spring of courage is relax'd.  
Follow my counsel—venture nothing rashly,  
Some one approaches—go—

*Mort.* And Mary hopes—

Shall I with empty hopes return to her?

*Lei.* Bring her my vows of everlasting love.—

*Mort.* Bring them yourself: I offer'd my assistance  
As her deliv'rer, not your messenger. *[Exit.*

*Elizabeth, Leicester.*

*Eliz.* Say who was here? I heard the sound of  
voices.

*Lei.* *[turning quickly and perplexed round, on hearing  
the Queen.]* It was young Mortimer—

*Eliz.* How now, my Lord :  
Why so confus'd?

*Lei.* [*collecting himself.*] Your presence is the cause.  
I never saw you yet so full of charms !  
Here stand I blinded by your beauty's splendour.  
Oh !—

*Eliz.* Whence this sigh ?

*Lei.* Have I no reason then  
To sigh ?—when I behold you in your glory,  
I feel anew, with pain unspeakable,  
The loss which threatens me.—

*Eliz.* What loss, my lord ?

*Lei.* Your heart—'tis your inestimable self :—  
Soon will you feel yourself within the arms  
Of your young ardent husband, highly bless'd :  
He will possess your heart, without a rival.  
*He* is of royal blood—that am not *I*.—  
Yet, spite of all the world can say, there lives not  
One on this globe, who with such fervent zeal  
Adores you, as the man who loses you.  
Anjou hath never seen you, can but love  
Your glory, and the splendour of your reign ;—  
But I love *you*—and were you born of all

The peasant maids the poorest, I the first  
Of kings, I would descend to your condition,  
And lay my crown and sceptre at your feet!

*Eliz.* O, pity me, my Dudley; do not blame  
me—

I cannot ask my heart—oh, that had chos'n  
Far otherwise; and how I envy others  
Who can exalt the object of their love!  
But I am not so happy! I cannot  
Place on the brows of him, who of all men  
Is dearest to me, the imperial crown.

The Queen of Scotland was allow'd to make  
Her hand the token of her inclination;—  
*She* hath had ev'ry freedom, and hath drank,  
And to the very dregs, the cup of joy.

*Lei.* And now she drinks the bitter cup of sorrow.

*Eliz.* She never did respect the world's opinion;—  
Life was to her a sport;—she never courted  
The yoke to which I willing bow'd my neck.  
And yet, methinks, I had as just a claim  
As she, to please myself, and taste the joys  
Of life:—but I preferr'd the rigid duties  
Which royalty imposed on me;—yet *she*,

*She* was the favourite of all the men,  
 Because she only strove to be a woman;  
 And youth and age became alike her suitors.  
 Thus are the men—voluptuaries all!  
 The willing slaves of levity and pleasure;  
 Value that least which claims their reverence.  
 And did not even Talbot, though grey-headed,  
 Grow young again, when speaking of her charms?

*Lei.* Forgive him—he was once her keeper, she  
 With cunning flattery hath blear'd his eyes.

*Eliz.* And is it really true, that she's so fair?  
 So often have I been oblig'd to hear  
 The praises of this wonder—it were well  
 If I could learn on what I might depend:  
 Pictures are flattering, and description lies;—  
 I will trust nothing, but my own conviction.  
 Why gaze you at me thus?—

*Lei.* I plac'd in thought  
 You and Maria Stuart, side by side.  
 Yes! I could wish, I own, to have the pleasure,  
 If it could be but secretly contriv'd,  
 To see you opposite the Scottish Queen.  
 Then would you feel, and not till then, the full

Enjoyment of your triumph :—she deserves  
To be thus humbled ; she deserves to see,  
With her own eyes, and envy is sharp-sighted,  
How much she is inferior to her  
In majesty of beauty, who excels her  
In ev'ry other virtue.

*Eliz.* She's the younger  
In years.—

*Lei* Indeed ? I should have never thought it ;  
Her sufferings, indeed ! 'tis possible  
They may have made her old before her time.—  
Yes, and 'twould mortify her more to see thee  
As bride—*she* hath already turn'd her back  
On each fair hope of life, and she would see thee  
Advancing tow'rs the open arms of joy—  
See thee as bride of France's royal son.—  
She who hath always made her marriage union  
With France her pride, and greatest boast, and still  
Depends upon it's powerful assistance.

*Eliz.* [*with a careless air.*] You know I'm teaz'd to  
see her.

*Lei.* She requests it  
As an indulgence, grant it her as penance;—

For though you should conduct her to the block,  
 Yet would it less torment her, than to see  
 Herself extinguish'd by your beauty's splendour.  
 Thus can you murder her, as she hath wish'd  
 To murder you—when she beholds your beauty  
 Guarded by modesty, and beaming with  
 The glory of unblemish'd reputation ;  
 (Which *she* with thoughtless levity discarded)  
 Exalted by the splendour of the crown,  
 And blooming now with tender bridal graces—  
 Then is the hour of her destruction come.  
 Yes—when I now behold you—you were never,  
 No never were you so prepar'd to seal  
 The triumph of your beauty. As but now  
 You enter'd the apartment, I was dazzled  
 As by a glorious vision from on high.  
 Could you but now, now as you are, appear  
 Before her, you could find no better moment.

*Eliz.* Now ?—no—not now—no Leicester—this  
 must be

Maturely weigh'd—I must with Burleigh—

*Lei.* Burleigh !

To him you are but Sov'reign, and as such

Alone he seeks your welfare ; but your rights  
 Deriv'd from womanhood, this tender point,  
 Must be decided by your own tribunal,  
 Not by the statesman :—yet e'en policy  
 Demands that you should see her, and allure,  
 By such a gen'rous deed, the public voice.—  
 You can hereafter act as it may please you,  
 To rid you of the hateful enemy.

*Eliz.* But would it then become me to behold  
 My kinswoman in infamy, and want ?  
 They say she is not royally attended ;  
 Would not the sight of her distress reproach me ?

*Lei.* You need not cross her threshold—hear my  
 counsel :—

A fortunate conjuncture favours it—  
 The hunt you mean to honour with your presence  
 Is in the neighbourhood of Fotheringay ;  
 Permission may be giv'n to Lady Stuart,  
 To take the air ; you meet her in the park,  
 As if by accident ; it must not seem  
 To have been plann'd, and should you be against it,  
 You need not speak.—

*Eliz.* If I commit a folly,

Be your's the fault, not mine.—I would not care  
To-day to cross your wishes, for to-day  
I've griev'd you more than all my other subjects.

[*tenderly.*

Let it then be your fancy, Leicester, hence  
You see the free obsequiousness of love,  
Which suffers that which it cannot approve.

[*Leicester prostrates himself before her, and the Curtain  
falls.*



*ACT III.*

*Scene.*—IN A PARK.—IN THE FORE-GROUND TREES; IN  
THE BACK-GROUND A DISTANT PROSPECT.

*Mary advances, running from behind the trees; Hamiah  
Kennedy follows slowly.*

KENNEDY.

**Y**ou hasten forwards just as had you wings—  
I cannot follow you so swiftly—wait.

*Mary.* Freedom returns ! O let me enjoy it,—  
Let me be childish,—be childish with me !  
Freedom invites me ! O let me employ it,  
Skimming with winged step light over the lea ;—  
Have I escaped from this mansion of mourning,  
Holds me no more the sad dungeon of care ?  
Let me, with thirsty impatience burning,  
Drink in the free, the celestial air !

*Ken.* O, my dear lady ! but a very little  
Is your sad jail extended ; you behold not

The wall that shuts us in ; these plaited tufts  
Of trees hide from your sight the hated object.

*Mary.* Thanks to these friendly trees, that hide  
from me

My prison walls, and flatter my illusion !  
Happy I'll dream myself, and free ;  
Why wake me from my dream's so sweet confusion ?  
Th' extended vault of heav'n around me lies,  
Free and unfetter'd range my eyes  
O'er space's vast immeasurable sea !  
From where yon misty mountains rise on high,  
I can my empire's boundaries explore ;  
And those light clouds which, steering southwards, fly,  
Seek the mild clime of France's genial shore.

Hastening clouds ! ye meteors that fly ;  
Could I but with you sail through the sky !  
Tenderly greet me the land of my youth !  
I am a pris'ner ! I'm in restraint,  
I have none else to bear my complaint,  
Free in æther your path is seen,  
Ye are not subject to this tyrant Queen.

*Ken.* Alas ! dear Lady ! You're beside yourself,  
This long-lost, long-sought freedom makes you rave.

*Mary.* Yonder's a fisher returning home ;—  
 Poor though it be, would he lend me his wherry,  
 Quick to congenial shores wou'd I ferry.  
 Spare is his trade, and labour's his doom—  
 Rich would I freight his vessel with treasure,  
 Such a draught shou'd he find as he never had seen,  
 Wealth should he find in his nets without measure,  
 Would he but rescue a captive Queen.

*Ken,* Fond, fruitless wishes ! See you not from far,  
 How we are follow'd by observing spies ?—  
 A dismal, barb'rous prohibition, scares  
 Each sympathetic being from our ways.

*Mary.* No, gentle Hannah ! think not that in vain  
 My prison gates are open'd ; this small favour  
 Announces me a greater happiness.—  
 No ! I mistake not—'tis the active hand  
 Of love to which I owe this kind indulgence.—  
 I recognize therein, the mighty arm  
 Of Leicester :—they will widen, by degrees,  
 My prison ; will accustom me through small,  
 To greater liberty, until at last  
 I shall behold the face of him whose hand  
 Will loosen soon my fetters, and for ever.

*Ken.* O, my dear Queen ! I cannot reconcile  
These contradictions. 'Twas but very lately  
That they announc'd your death, and suddenly  
To-day you have such liberty—to those  
I have been told the chains are also loos'd,  
Whom everlasting liberty awaits.

*[hunting horns at a distance.]*

*Mary.* Hears't thou the bugle ? blithly resounding,  
Hear'st thou its blast through wood and plain ?  
Could I once more on my nimble steed bounding,  
Join the jocund, the frolicksome train !

*[hunting horns again heard.]*

Again ! O sadly pleasing remembrance !  
These are the sounds which so sprightly and clear,  
Oft, when with music the hounds and the horn,  
Cheerfully waken'd the slumbering morn,  
On the heaths of the Highlands delighted my ear.

*To them, Paulett.*

*Paul.* Well ! have I done at last then right, my lady ;  
Do I deserve this once, at least, your thanks ?

*Mary.* How say you, Sir; is't you who have  
procured me  
This favour? you?

*Paul.* Why should it not be I?  
I was at the court, and gave the Queen your letter.—

*Mary.* You gave it her? In sooth, Sir, did you so?  
And is this freedom which I now enjoy,  
My letter's consequence?

*Paul.* [*significantly.*] Nor that alone;  
Prepare yourself to see a greater still.

*Mary.* A greater still! what shou'd that mean, Sir  
Knight?

*Paul.* You heard the bugle-horn?

*Mary.* [*starting back with foreboding apprehension.*]

You frighten me—

*Paul.* The Queen is hunting in the neighbour-  
hood—

*Mary.* What!

*Paul.* In not many moments she's before you.—

*Ken.* [*hastening towards Mary, and about to fall.*]  
How fare you, gracious lady?—you grow pale.

*Paul.* How? is't not right? was it not then your  
pray'r?

'Tis granted now, before it was expected ;  
 You ever were before so nimble-tongued ;  
 Now you may use your talent ; now's the moment  
 To speak.

*Mary.* O, why was I not told of this ?  
 Now I am not prepar'd for it—now not—  
 What, as the greatest favour, I besought  
 Appears now frightful, terrible :—come, Hannah,  
 Lead me towards the house, that I collect  
 My spirits.

*Paul.* Stay ;—you must await her here.  
 Yes !—I believe you may be well alarm'd  
 To stand before your judge.—

*To them, the Earl of Shrewsbury.*

*Mary.* 'Tis not for that,  
 O God ! I've other thoughts, and other feelings.  
 O, worthy Shrewsbury !—You come as 'twere  
 An angel sent from heav'n : O, help me ! help me.  
 I cannot, will not see her. Save me, save me  
 From the detested sight !—

*Shrews.* Collect yourself,

My Queen, and summon up your courage; this  
Is the decisive moment.—

*Mary.* I have waited,  
For years have I prepar'd myself to meet it;  
All have I studied, well have weigh'd, and written  
Each word within the tablets of my mem'ry,  
How I might touch, and move her to compassion.  
Forgotten suddenly, effac'd is all,  
And nothing lives within me at this moment,  
But the fierce, burning feeling of my suff'rings.  
My heart is turn'd to bloody hate against her;  
All gentle thoughts, all words of soft persuasion,  
Are gone, and round me stand with grisly mien,  
The fiends of hell, and shake their snaky locks!

*Shrews.* Command your wild, rebellious blood;—  
constrain

The bitterness which fills your heart;—it brings  
No good when hatred is oppos'd to hatred.  
How much soe'er your inmost soul resist,  
Yield to the times, obey the moment's laws;  
She is the mighty one, be you then humble.

*Mary.* 'Fore her? I never, never can.

*Shrews.* Yet be so;—

Speak with respect, with calmness; strive to move  
Her magnanimity; insist not, now,  
Upon your rights, not now,—'tis not the season.

*Mary.* Ah! woe is me! I've pray'd for my destruction,

And, as a curse to me, my pray'r is heard.

We never shou'd have seen each other—never!—

O, this can never, never come to good.

Rather in love cou'd fire and water meet,

The timid lamb embrace the roaring tiger!—

I have been hurt too grievously; she hath

Too grievously oppress'd me;—no atonement

Can make us friends!—

*Shrews.* First see her, ~~face to face~~:—

Did I not see how she was mov'd at reading

Your letter? how her eyes were drown'd in tears?

No,—she is not unfeeling;—only place

More confidence in her.—It was for this

That I came on before her, to entreat you

To be collected,—to admonish you—

*Mary.* Is Burleigh with her too, my evil genius?

*Shrews.* No one attends her but the Earl of Leicester.—



*Mary.* Lord Leicester?—

*Shrews.* Fear not him; it is not he  
Who wishes your destruction;—'twas his work,  
That here the Queen hath granted you this meeting.

*Mary.* Ah! well I knew it.

*Shrews.* What?

*Paul.* The Queen approaches.

*[they all draw aside; Mary alone remains, leaning  
on Kennedy.]*

*To them, Elizabeth, Earl of Leicester, and Retinue.*

*Eliz.* *[to Leicester.]* What seat's that, Leicester?

*Lei.* Fotheringay Castle.

*Eliz.* *[to Shrewsbury.]* My Lord, send our retinue  
back to London;

The people crowd too eager in the roads,  
We seek a refuge in this silent park.

*[Talbot sends the train away. She looks steadfastly  
at Mary, as she speaks further with Paulett.]*

My honest people love me overmuch,  
Idoltrous are these loud signs of joy;  
Thus should a God be honour'd, not a mortal.

Mary. [*who the whole time had lean'd, almost fainting, on Kennedy, rises now, and her eyes meet the steady piercing look of Elizabeth; she shudders and throws herself again upon Kennedy's bosom.*]

O God! from out these features speaks no heart.

Eliz. What lady's that?—

[*a general, embarrassed silence.*]

Lei. You are at Fotheringay,

My Queen!—

Eliz. [*as if surprised, casting an angry look at Leicester.*] Who hath done this? my Lord of Leicester.

Lei. Tis past, my Queen;—and now that heav'n hath led

Your footsteps hither, be magnanimous;

Let mercy, royal mercy, be triumphant.

Shrews. O royal mistress! yield to our entreaties;  
O look upon this poor unhappy one,

Who here dissolves before you.

[*Mary collects herself, and begins to advance towards Elizabeth, stops shuddering at half-way:—her action expresses the most violent contest with herself.*]

*Eliz.* How, my lords !

Which of you then announc'd to me a pris'ner  
Bow'd down by woe ? I see a haughty one,  
By no means humbled by calamity.

*Mary.* So be it ;—I will also stoop to this.—  
Farewell weak heavings, of the gen'rous soul !  
I will forget then what I am, and what  
I've suffer'd ; I will fall before *her* feet  
Who hurl'd me down to this indignity.

*[she turns towards the Queen.]*

The voice of heav'n decides for you, my sister,  
I see your happy brows are crown'd with triumph,  
The Godhead I adore, which thus hath rais'd you.

*[she kneels.]*

But in your turn be you too gen'rous, sister ;  
Let me not lie disgracefully before you ;  
Stretch forth your hand, your royal hand, to raise  
Your sister from a fall so very deep.

*Eliz. [stepping back.]* You are where it becomes you,  
Lady Stuart ;

And thankfully I prize my God's protection,  
Who hath not suffer'd me to kneel a suppliant  
Thus at your feet, as you now kneel at mine.

Mary. [*with encreasing energy of feeling.*] Think on  
all earthly things; vicissitudes.

Oh! there are gods who punish haughty pride :  
Respect them, honour them, the dreadful ones  
Who thus before thy feet have humbled me !  
Before these strangers, who behold us, honour  
Yourself in me : profane not, O, defile not  
The blood of the great Tudors, which pervades  
My veins, as well as yours.—O God in Heav'n !  
Stand not there rough, and inaccessible,  
Like the steep cliff, which, lab'ring to embrace,  
Struggles in vain the shipwreck'd mariner ;  
My all, my life, my fortune all depends  
Upon the influence of my words, my tears ;  
That I may move your heart, O ! lighten mine.  
If you regard me with that look of ice,  
My shudd'ring heart contracts itself, the stream  
Of tears is dried, and frigid horror chains  
The words of supplication in my bosom !

Eliz. [*cold and severe.*] What would you say to me,  
my Lady Stuart?

You wish'd to speak with me ; and I, forgetting  
The Queen, although so heavily offended,

Fulfil the pious duty of the sister,  
 And grant you here the comfort of my presence.  
 Yet I, in yielding to the gen'rous feelings  
 Of magnanimity, expose myself  
 To rightful censure, that I stoop so low,  
 For well you know, you would have had me murder'd.

*Mary.* O! how shall I begin; how shall I then  
 So artfully arrange my cautious words,  
 That they may touch, yet not offend, your heart :—  
 Strengthen my words, O God! and take from them  
 Whate'er might wound :—alas! I cannot speak  
 In my own cause's favour, but I must  
 Accuse you heavily, and that I would not ;—  
 You have not, as you ought, behav'd to me ;  
 For I'm a Queen, like you, yet *you* have held me  
 Confin'd in prison ; as a suppliant  
 I came to you, yet *you* in me insulted  
 The pious use of hospitality ;  
 Despising too the holy law of nations,  
 Immur'd me in a jail, and tore from me  
 My friends and servants ; then was I expos'd  
 To unbecoming want, and subjected  
 To a disgraceful, insolent tribunal.—

No more of this ;—in everlasting silence  
 Be buried all the cruelties I suffer'd.  
 See,—I will throw the blame of all on fate,  
 'Twas not your fault, it was not *my* fault neither :  
 An evil spirit rose from the abyss,  
 To nourish in our hearts the flames of hate,  
 By which our tender youth had been divided.  
 It grew with us, and bad designing men  
 Fann'd with their ready breath the fatal fire :  
 Frantics, enthusiasts, with sword and dagger  
 Arm'd the uncall'd-for hand ! that is the curse  
 Of kings, that they, divided, tear the world  
 In pieces with their hatred, and let loose  
 The raging furies of each hellish discord !  
 Now is no foreign tongue between us, sister,

*[approaching her confidently, and with a flattering tone.]*

We stand now face to face ; now, sister, speak ;  
 Name but my crime, I'll fully satisfy you.—  
 Alas ! had you but then vouchsaf'd to hear me,  
 As I so earnest sought to meet your eye,  
 It never would have come to this, nor would,  
 Here in this mournful place, have happen'd now  
 This so distressful, this so mournful meeting.

*Eliz.* My better stars preserv'd me. I was warn'd,  
 And laid not to my breast the pois'nous adder !—  
 Accuse not fate ; your own deceitful heart  
 It was, the wild ambition of your house :—  
 As yet no enmities had pass'd between us,  
 When your imperious uncle, the proud priest,  
 Whose shameless hand grasps at all crowns, attack'd me  
 With unprovok'd hostility, and taught  
 You, but too docile, to assume my arms,  
 To vest yourself with my imperial title,  
 And meet me in the lists in mortal strife :  
 What arms employ'd he not to storm my throne?  
 The curses of the priests, the people's sword,  
 The dreadful weapons of religious frenzy ;—  
 Here in my kingdom's peaceful citadel,  
 He fann'd the flames of civil insurrection ;—  
 But God is with me, and the haughty priest  
 Has not maintain'd the field : the blow was aim'd  
 Full at my head, but yours it is which falls !

*Mary.* I am in Heaven's hand : you will not, sure,  
 Exert so bloodily the pow'r it gives you.

*Eliz.* Who shall prevent me ? Say, did not your  
 uncle

Set all the kings of Europe the example,  
 How to conclude a peace with those they hate.  
 Be mine the school of Saint Bartholomew ;  
 What's kindred then to me, or law of nations?  
 The church can break the bands of ev'ry duty;  
 It consecrates the regicide, the traitor ;  
 I only practise what your priests have taught:  
 Say then, what surety can be offer'd me  
 Should I magnanimously loose your bonds?  
 Say, with what lock can I secure your faith,  
 Which by St. Peter's keys cannot be open'd?  
 Force is my only surety ; no alliance  
 Can be concluded with a race of vipers.

*Mary.* O! this is but your dismal, dark suspicion!  
 For you have constantly regarded me  
 But as a stranger, and an enemy.  
 Had you declar'd me heir to your dominions,  
 As is my right, then gratitude and love  
 Had fix'd, for you, in me a faithful friend  
 And kinswoman.

*Eliz.* Your friendship is abroad,  
 Your house is Papacy, the monk's your brother.  
 Name *you* my successor! the treach'rous snare!



That in my life you might seduce my people;  
 That, like a sly Armida, you might catch  
 The kingdom's gen'rous youth in your lewdness;  
 That all might turn to the new rising sun,  
 And I—

*Mary.* O sister, rule your realm in peace;  
 I give up ev'ry claim to these domains—  
 Alas! the pinions of my soul are lam'd;  
 Greatness entices me no more : your point  
 Is gain'd; I am reduc'd to Mary's shadow—  
 My noble spirit is at last broke down  
 In base captivity :—you've done your worst  
 On me; you have destroy'd me in my bloom :—  
 Now, end your work, my sister;—speak at length  
 The word, which to pronounce has brought you  
 hither ;

For I will ne'er believe you hither came  
 To mock unfeelingly your hapless victim.—  
 Pronounce this word ;—say, Mary, you are free :  
 You have already felt my pow'r, learn now  
 To honour too my generosity ;—  
 Say so, and I will take my life, will take  
 My freedom, as a present from your hands.

One word makes all undone ;—I wait for it ;—  
 O let me, let me not too long await it.—  
 Woe to you, end you not with this one word ?—  
 For should you now not health-imparting, noble,  
 Like a divinity, go from me, sister,—  
 Not for this whole rich island, not for all  
 The countries which the ocean encloses,  
 Would I before you stand, as you 'fore me !

*Eliz.* Confess you then at length, that you are  
 conquer'd :

Are all your schemes exhausted ! Is no murd'rer  
 More on the road ? will no adventurer  
 Attempt again, for you, the sad achievement ?  
 Yes, madam, it is over :—You'll seduce  
 No more : the world at length has other cares ;—  
 None is ambitious of the dang'rous honour  
 Of being your fourth husband :—You destroy  
 Your wooers like your husbands.

*Mary.* [*starting angrily.*] Sister, sister !—  
 O God ! God ! give me, give me moderation !

*Eliz.* [*regards her long, with a look of proud contempt.*]  
 Those then, my Lord of Leicester, are the charms  
 Which with impunity no man can view,

Near which no woman dare attempt to stand ?  
In sooth, this honour might be cheaply gain'd ;  
She who to all is common, may with ease  
Become the common object of applause.

*Mary.* That is too much !—

*Eliz.* [*laughing insultingly.*] You shew us now,  
indeed,

Your real face ; till now 'twas but the mask.

*Mary.* [*burning with rage, yet dignified and noble.*]

My sins were human, and the fruits of youth ;  
Superior force seduced me. I have never  
Denied it, have not hid it :—I despis'd,  
With royal openness, all false appearance.  
The worst of me is known, and I can say,  
That I am better than my reputation.  
Woe to you ! when, in time to come, the world  
Shall draw the robe of honour from your deeds,  
With which, a mistress in hypocrisy,  
You've hid the lawless flames of stolen lust.—  
Virtue was not your portion from your mother ;  
Well know we what it was which brought the  
head  
Of Anna Boleyn to the bloody block.

Shrews. [*stepping between both Queens.*] O! God  
in heav'n! must it come to this!

Is this the moderation, the submission,  
My Lady?—

Mary. Moderation! I've supported  
What human nature can support: farewell,  
Lamb-hearted resignation, passive patience  
Fly to thy native heaven; burst at length  
Thy bonds, come forward from thy dreary cave,  
In all thy fury, long-suppressed rancour!—  
And thou, who to the anger'd basilisk  
Impart'st the murd'rous glance, O! arm my tongue  
With poison'd darts!

Shrews. O, she's beside herself!  
Forgive the mad exasperated woman.

[*Elizabeth, speechless for anger, casts enraged looks at  
Mary.*

Lei. [*in the most violent agitation; he seeks to lead  
Elizabeth away.*] Attend not to her rage:—away,  
—away,

From this disastrous place!—

Mary. [*raising her voice.*] A bastard soils,  
Profanes the English throne! the gen'rous Britons

Are cheated by a juggler, whose whole figure  
Is false and painted, heart as well as face !—  
If right prevail'd, you now would in the dust  
Before me lie, for I'm your rightful monarch !—

*[Elizabeth hastily quits the Stage ; the Lords follow  
her in the greatest consternation.]*

*Mary, Kennedy.*

*Ken.* What have you done ? she goes in rage ;—  
now all  
Is o'er ; all hope is lost.

*Mary.* *[still quite beside herself.]* She goes in rage !  
She bears the worm of death within her heart !—

*[falling on Kennedy's bosom.]*

Now I'm at length at ease, at last, at last,  
After whole years of sorrow and abasement,  
One moment of victorious revenge ;  
A weight falls off my heart, a weight of mountains ;—  
I plung'd the steel in my oppressor's breast !

*Ken.* Unhappy lady !—Frenzy overcomes you,  
Yes, you have wounded your inveterate foe ;

'Tis she who wields the light'ning, she is Queen,  
You have insulted her before her minion,

*Mary.* I have abas'd her before Leicester's eyes;  
He saw it, he was witness of my triumph.—  
How did I hurl her from her haughty height,  
He saw it, and his presence strengthen'd me.

*To them, Mortimer.*

*Ken.* O Sir! what an event!—

*Mort.* I heard it all—

*[gives the nurse a sign to repair to her post, and  
draws nearer; his whole appearance expresses the  
utmost violence of passion.]*

—Thine is the palm;—thou trodd'st her to the dust!—

Thou wast the queen, she was the malefactor;—

I am transported with thy noble courage;—

Yes!—I adore thee; like a goddess great

And glorious beam'st thou on me at this moment.

*Mary.* *[with vivacity and expectation.]* You spoke  
with Leicester, brought my letter to him,

My present too?—O speak, Sir.

*Mort.* [*beholding her with glowing greedy looks.*] How  
thy noble,

Thy royal indignation shone, and cast  
A glory round thy beauty; yes, by heav'ns,  
Thou art the fairest woman upon earth!

*Mary.* Sir, satisfy, I beg you, my impatience;  
What says his lordship? say, Sir, may I hope?

*Mort.* Who?—he?—he is a wretch, a very  
coward,  
Hope not from him;—despise him, and forget  
him!—

*Mary.* What say you?—

*Mort.* He deliver, and possess you!  
Why let him dare it:—he!—he must with me  
In mortal contest first deserve the prize!

*Mary.* You gave him not my letter? then, indeed,  
My hopes are lost!—

*Mort.* The coward loves his life.  
Whoe'er would rescue you, and call you his,  
Must boldly dare affront e'en death!—

*Mary.* And will he  
Do nothing for me then?—

*Mort.* No more of him.—

What can he do? What need have we of him?

I will release you ; I alone.—

*Mary.* Alas !

What pow'r have you?—

*Mort.* Deceive yourself no more ;  
Think not your case is now as formerly ;  
The moment that the Queen thus quitted you,  
That your speech took this turn, that very moment  
All hope was lost, each way of mercy shut.  
Now deeds must speak, now boldness must decide ;  
Free must you be before the morning breaks.

*Mary.* Whatsay you, Sir—to night?—impossible!

*Mort.* Hear how it is resolv'd :—I led my friends  
Into a private chapel, where a priest  
Heard our confession, and, for ev'ry sin  
We had committed, gave us absolution ;  
He gave us absolution too, beforehand,  
For ev'ry crime we might commit in future ;  
He gave us too the final sacrament,  
And we are ready for the final journey.

*Mary.* O! what an awful, dreadful preparation!

*Mort.* We scale, this very night, the castle's walls ;—  
The keys are in my pow'r, the guards we murder!



Then from thy chamber bear thee forcibly.  
Each living soul must die beneath our hands,  
That none remain who might disclose the deed.

*Mary.* And Drury, Paulet, my two keepers, they  
Would sooner spill their latest drop of blood—

*Mort.* They fall the very first beneath my steel.—

*Mary.* What, Sir!—your uncle? how! your  
second father!—

*Mort.* Must perish by my hand,—I murder him!—

*Mary.* O, bloody outrage!

*Mort.* We have been absolv'd  
Beforehand; I can now commit the utmost;—  
I can, I will do so!—

*Mary.* O dreadful, dreadful!

*Mort.* And should I be oblig'd to kill the Queen,  
I've sworn it on the host, it must be done!—

*Mary.* No, Mortimer;—e'er so much blood for me—

*Mort.* What is the life of all, compar'd to thee,  
And to my love? The bond which holds the world  
Together may be loos'd, a second deluge  
Come rolling on, and swallow all creation!  
I value nothing more; before I quit  
My hold on thee, the world and time be ended!—

Mary. [*retiring.*] God!—Sir, what language; and  
what looks! they frighten,  
They scare me!

Mort. [*with unsteady looks, expressive of quiet madness.*]  
Life is but a moment—Death  
Is but a moment too.—Why! let them drag me  
To Tyburn, let them tear me limb from limb,  
With red-hot pincers—

*[violently approaching her with extended arms.]*  
If I clasp but thee  
Within my arms, thou fervently lov'd!—

Mary. Madman, avaunt!—

Mort. To rest upon this bosom,  
To press upon this love-expiring mouth—

Mary. Leave me, for God's sake, Sir; let me goin—

Mort. He is a madman who neglects to clasp  
His happiness in strictest close embrace,  
When Heav'n has kindly giv'n it to his arms.—  
I will deliver you, and though it cost  
A thousand lives, I will: but I swear too,  
As true as God's in Heav'n, I will possess you!—

Mary. O! will no God, no angel then protect me?  
Dread destiny! thou throw'st me, in thy wrath,

From one tremendous terror to the other!

Was I then only born to waken frenzy?

Conspire then hate and love, alike, to fright me?

*Mort.* Yes, glowing as their hatred is my love;  
They would behead thee, they would wound this  
neck,

So dazzling white, with the disgraceful axe!

O! offer to the living god of joy

What thou must sacrifice to bloody hatred!

Inspire thy happy lover with those charms

Which are no more thine own; those golden locks

Are forfeit to the dismal pow'rs of death,

O! use them to entwine thy slave for ever!—

*Mary.* Alas! alas! what language must I hear!

My woe, my suff'rings should be sacred to you,

Although my royal brows are so no more.—

*Mort.* The crown is fallen from thy brows, thou  
hast

No more of earthly majesty; attempt it,

Raise thy imperial voice, see if a friend,

If a deliverer will rise to save you.—

Thy moving form alone remains, the high,

The godlike influence of thy heav'nly beauty;

This bids me venture all, this arms my hand  
With might, and drives me tow'rd the hangman's axe!

*Mary.* O! who will save me from his raging  
madness?

*Mort.* Service that's bold, demands a bold reward.  
Why shed their blood the daring?—is not life  
Life's highest good? a madman, who in vain  
Casts life away—first will I take my rest,  
Enjoy my transports on its warmest breast!—

*[he presses her violently to his bosom.]*

*Mary.* Must I then call for help against the man  
Who would deliver me!—

*Mort.* Thou'rt not unfeeling,  
The world ne'er censur'd thee for frigid rigour;  
The fervent pray'r of love can touch thy heart,  
Thou blessed'st formerly thy singer, Rizzio,  
And suffer'dst Bothwell easily to win thee.

*Mary.* Presumptuous man!—

*Mort.* He was indeed thy tyrant,  
Thou trembled'st at his rudeness, whilst thou lov'd'st  
him;  
Well then—if only terror can obtain thee  
By the infernal gods!—

*Mary.* Away—you're mad!—

*Mort.* I'll teach thee then before *me* too to tremble—

*Ken.* [*entering suddenly.*] They're coming—they approach—the Park is fill'd

With men in arms.—

*Mort.* [*starting, and catching at his sword.*] I will defend you—I—

*Mary.* O Hannah! save me, save me from his hands,

Where shall I find, poor suff'rer, an asylum?

O! to what saint shall I address my pray'rs?

Force here attacks me, and within is murder!

[*she flees toward the house, Kennedy follows her.*]

*Mortimer, Paul, and Drury* rush in, in the greatest consternation.—*Attendants hasten over the Stage.*

*Paul.* Shut all the portals—draw the bridges up—

*Mort.* What is the matter, uncle?—

*Paul.* Where is the murtheress?

Down with her, down into the darkest dungeon!

*Mort.* What is the matter? What has pass'd—

*Paul.* The Queen!

Accursed hand! infernal machination!

*Mort.* The Queen!—what Queen?—

*Paul.* What Queen! the Queen of England;—  
She has been murder'd on the road to London,—

*[hastens into the house.]*

*Mortimer, soon after, O'Kelly.*

*Mort.* *[after a pause.]* Am I then mad? Came not  
one running by  
But now, and cried aloud, the Queen is murder'd?—  
No, no; I did but dream;—a fev'rish fancy  
Paints that upon my mind as true and real,  
Which but existed in my frantic thoughts.—  
Who's there? It is O'Kelly—so dismay'd—

O'Kelly. *[rushing in.]* Flee, Mortimer, O! flee—  
for all is lost!

*Mort.* What then is lost?—

O'Kelly. O! question me not long,  
Think but on speedy flight.—

*Mort.* What then?—

*O' Kelly.* Sauvage,  
That madman, struck the blow.—

*Mort.* It is then true !

*O' Kelly.* True, true—O ! save yourself.—

*Mort.* [*exultingly.*] The Queen is murder'd,—  
And conqu'ring Mary, mounts the English throne !

*O' Kelly.* Is murder'd ! who said that ?—

*Mort.* Yourself.—

*O' Kelly.* She lives,  
And I, and you, and all of us are lost.

*Mort.* She lives !—

*O' Kelly.* The blow was badly aim'd, her cloak  
Receiv'd it, Shrewsbury disarm'd the murd'rer.

*Mort.* She lives !—

*O' Kelly.* She lives to whelm us all in ruin ;  
Come, they surroud the park already ; come—

*Mort.* Who did this frantic deed ?—

*O' Kelly.* It was the monk  
From Toulon, whom you saw immers'd in thought,  
As in the chapel the Pope's bull was read,  
By which the Queen was anathemiz'd.—  
He wish'd to take the nearest, shortest way,  
To free, with one bold stroke, the church of God,

And gain the crown of martyrdom :—he trusted  
His purpose only to the priest, and put it  
In execution on the London road.

Mort. [*after a long silence.*] Alas ! a fierce destruc-  
tive fate pursues thee,

Unhappy one !—yes—now thy death is fix'd ;  
Thy very angel has prepar'd thy fall !—

O' Kelly. Say, whither you will take your flight ?

I go

To hide me in the forests of the north.

Mort. Fly thither, and may God attend your flight ;  
But I will strive my love once more to save,  
If not, I'll make my bed upon her grave.

[*Exeunt at different sides.*]



ACT IV.

*Scene.*—ANTI-CHAMBER.

*Count L'Aubespine, the Earls of Kent and Leicester.*

L'AUBESPINE.

How fares her Majesty, my lords? you see me  
Still stunn'd, and quite beside myself for terror?  
How happen'd it? how was it possible  
That, in the midst of this most loyal people—

*Lei.* The deed was not attempted by the people;  
The murd'rer was a subject of your king,  
A Frenchman.—

*L'Aub.* Sure a lunatic.—

*Lei.* A Papist,  
Count L'Aubespine.

*To them, Burleigh in conversation with Davison.*

*Burl.* Sir; let the death-warrant  
Be instantly made out, and pass the seal;

Then let it be presented to the Queen;  
Her Majesty must sign it.—Hasten, Sir,  
We have no time to lose.

*Dav.* It shall be done. *[he goes.]*

*L'Aub.* My lord high Treasurer, my faithful heart  
Partakes the just rejoicings of the realm;  
Prais'd be almighty God, who hath averted  
Assassination from our much-lov'd Queen!—

*Bur.* Prais'd be his name, who thus hath turn'd to  
scorn

The malice of our foes!—

*L'Aub.* May God confound  
The perpetrator of this cursed deed!—

*Bur.* Its perpetrator and its base contriver!—

*L'Aub.* Please you, my lord, to bring me to the  
Queen,

That I may lay the warm congratulations  
Of my imperial master at her feet.

*Bur.* There is no need of this.

*L'Aub.* *[officially.]* My lord of Burleigh,  
I know my duty.—

*Bur.* Sir, your duty is  
To quit, and that without delay, this kingdom.—

L'Aub. [*stepping back with signs of wonder.*] How!  
what was that?—

Bur. The sacred character  
Of an Ambassador to-day protects you,  
But not to-morrow.—

L'Aub. What's my crime?—

Bur. Should I  
Once name it, there were then no pardon for it.—

L'Aub. I hope, my lord, my charge's privilege—

Bur. Screens not a traitor.

Lei. and Kent. What was that?—

L'Aub. My lord,  
Consider well—

Bur. Your passport was discover'd  
In the assassin's pocket.—

Kent. Righteous heav'n!

L'Aub. Sir, many passports are subscrib'd by me,  
I cannot know the secret thoughts of men.

Bur. He in your house confess'd, and was absolv'd—

L'Aub. My house is open—

Bur. To our enemies.

L'Aub. I claim a strict inquiry—

Bur. Tremble at it—

*L'Aub.* My monarch, in my person, is insulted,  
He will annul the marriage contract.—

*Bur. That*

My royal mistress has annull'd already ;  
England will not unite herself with France.  
My lord of Kent, I give it you in charge  
To see the Count L'Aubespine embark'd in safety,  
The furious populace has storm'd his palace,  
Where a whole arsenal of arms was found ;  
And should they see him they would tear him piece-  
meal.

Conceal him till their fury is abated,—  
You answer for his life.—

*L'Aub.* I go—I leave  
This kingdom, where they sport with public treaties,  
And trample on the laws of nations : yet  
My monarch, be assur'd, will vent his rage  
In bloody vengeance!—

*Bur.* Let him seek it here.

[*Exeunt Kent and L'Aubespine.*

*Leicester, Burleigh.*

*Lei.* And thus you loose, yourself, the knot of union  
Which you officiously, uncall'd for, bound !  
You have deserv'd but little of your country,  
My lord ; this trouble was superfluous.

*Bur.* My aim was good, though fate declar'd against  
it ;

Happy is he who has so fair a conscience !

*Lei.* Well know we the mysterious mien of  
Burleigh,

When he is on the hunt for deeds of treason.

Now you are in your element, my lord ;

A monstrous outrage has been just committed,

And darkness veils, as yet, its perpetrators :—

Now will a court of inquisition rise ;

Each word, each look be weigh'd ; men's very thoughts

Be call'd before the bar ; and you, my lord,

Are the important man, the mighty Atlas

Of state, all England rests upon your shoulders.

*Bur.* In you, my lord, I recognize my master ;

For such a vict'ry, as your eloquence  
Has gain'd, I cannot boast.—

*Lei.* My lord, your meaning.—

*Bur.* You were the man who knew, behind my  
back,

To lure the Queen to Fotheringay-castle.

*Lei.* Behind your back! when did I fear to act  
Before your face?—

*Bur.* You led her Majesty?

O, no—you led her not—it was the Queen  
Who was so gracious to conduct *you* thither.

*Lei.* What mean you, lord, by that?—

*Bur.* The noble part

You forc'd the Queen to play! the glorious triumph  
Which you prepar'd for her! too gracious princess!

So shamelessly, so wantonly to mock

Thy unsuspecting goodness, to betray thee

So pitiless to thy exulting foe!

This then's the magnanimity, the grace

Which suddenly possess'd you in the council!

This Stuart is for this so despicable,

So weak an enemy, that it would scarce

Be worth the pains, to stain us with her blood.

A specious plan ! and sharply pointed too ;  
'Tis only pity this sharp point is broken.

*Lei.* Unworthy wretch !—this instant follow me,  
And answer, at the throne, this insolence.

*Bur.* You'll find me there, my lord ; and take but  
care,  
That *there* your eloquence may not desert you. [*Exit.*

*Leicester, alone ; then Mortimer.*

*Lei.* I am detected ! all my plot's disclos'd !  
How has my evil genius trac'd my steps !  
Alas ! if he has proofs, if she should learn  
That I have held a secret correspondence  
With her worst enemy ; how criminal  
Shall I appear to her ! how false and treach'rous  
Will seem my counsel, and the fatal pains  
I took to lure the Queen to Fotheringay !  
I've shamefully betray'd, I have expos'd her  
To her detested enemy's revilings !  
O ! never, never can she pardon that—  
All will appear as if premeditated.

The bitter turn of this sad interview;  
 The triumph and the tauntings of her rival;  
 Yes, e'en the murd'rous hand, which had prepar'd  
 A bloody, monst'rous, unexpected fate;  
 All, all will be ascrib'd to my suggestions!  
 I see no prospect!—no where—ha!—who comes?

*[Mortimer enters, in the most violent uneasiness, and  
 looks with apprehension round him.]*

*Mort.* Lord Leicester! Is it you? are we alone?

*Lei.* Ill-fated wretch, away! what seek you here?

*Mort.* They are upon our track—upon your's too,  
 Be vigilant!—

*Lei.* Away, away!—

*Mort.* They know  
 That private conferences have been held  
 At L'Aubespine's—

*Lei.* What's that to me?—

*Mort.* They know too  
 That the assassin—

*Lei.* That is your affair—  
 Audacious wretch! to dare to mix my name  
 In your detested outrage: go; defend,  
 Yourself, your bloody deeds!—



*Mort.* But only hear me.—

*Lei.* [*violently enraged.*] Down, down to hell!—why

cling you at my heels

Like an infernal spirit!—I disclaim you—

I know you not—I make no common cause

With murderers!—

*Mort.* You will not hear me then!—

I came to warn you—you too are detected.—

*Lei.* How! what?—

*Mort.* Lord Burleigh went to Fotheringay,—

Just as the luckless deed had been attempted;—

Search'd with severest care the Queen's apartments,

And found there—

*Lei.* What?—

*Mort.* A letter which the Queen

Had just address'd to you—

*Lei.* Unhappy woman!—

*Mort.* In which she calls on you to keep your

word,

Renews the promise of her hand, and mentions

The picture which she sent you.—

*Lei.* Death and hell!—

*Mort.* Lord Burleigh has the letter—

*Lei.* I am lost!—

[*During the following speech of Mortimer, Leicester goes up and down, as in despair.*]

*Mort.* Improve the moment; be beforehand with him;

And save yourself—save her!—an oath can clear

Your fame; think of excuses to avert

The worst.—*I am disarm'd, can do no more;*

'Tis now your turn, my lord—try what your weight,

What bold assurance can effect.

*Lei.* [*stops suddenly, as if resolved.*] I will—

[*goes to the door, opens it, and calls.*]

Who waits there? Guards!

[*to the Officer who comes in with Soldiers.*]

Take in your charge this traitor,

And guard him closely!—a most dreadful plot

Is brought to light—I'll to her Majesty,

And—

*Mort.* [*stands at first immoveable for wonder: collects himself soon, and follows Leicester with his looks expressive of the most sovereign contempt.*] Infamous wretch!—But I deserve it all.

Who told me then to trust this practis'd villain?

Now strides he o'er my head, and o'er my ruins

He builds the bridge of safety!—be it so—

Go, save thyself—my lips are clos'd for ever;—

I will not join e'en thee in my destruction—

I would not own thee, no, not e'en in death;

Life is the faithless villain's only good!—

*[to the Officer of the guard, who steps forward to seize*

*him.*

What wilt thou, slave of tyranny, with me?

I scorn thy threat'nings—I am free. *[drawing a dagger.*

*Officer.* He's arm'd;—rush in, and wrest his weapon

from him. *[they rush upon him, he defends himself.*

Mort. *[raising his voice.]* And in this latest mo-

ment, shall my heart

Expand itself in freedom, and my tongue

Shall break this long constraint.—Curse and destruc-

tion

Upon you all, who have betray'd your God,

And your true sov'reign! who, alike estrang'd,

To earthly Mary false as to the heav'nly,

Have sold your duties to this bastard Queen!

*Officer.* Hear you these blasphemies?—rush forward

—seize him!

*Mori.* Beloved Queen ! I could not set thee free ;  
 Yet take from me a lesson how to die.  
 Maria, holy one, O ! pray for me !  
 Receive me in thy heav'nly arms on high !  
*[stabs himself, and falls into the arms of the guard.]*

THE APARTMENT OF THE QUEEN.

*Elizabeth, with a letter in her hand, Burleigh.*

*Eliz.* To lure me thither ! thus to sport with me !  
 The traitor ! thus to lead me, as in triumph,  
 To glut the vengeance of his paramour.  
 O, Burleigh ! ne'er was woman so deceiv'd.

*Bur.* I cannot yet conceive what potent means,  
 What magic he exerted, to surprise  
 My Queen's accustom'd prudence.—

*Eliz.* O, I die  
 For shame ! how must he laugh to scorn my weakness.  
 I thought to humble *her*, and was myself,  
*Myself* the object of her scorn.—

*Bur.* By this  
 You see how faithfully I counsell'd you.

*Eliz.* O, I am sorely punish'd, that I turn'd  
My ear from your wise counsels; yet I thought  
I might confide in him. Who could suspect,  
Beneath the oath of faithfullest devotion,  
A deadly snare?—who can I then confide in,  
When he deceives me? he, whom I have made  
The greatest of the great, whom I've distinguish'd  
As next to my own person, whom I've suffer'd  
To play, at court, the master and the king.

*Bur.* Yet in that very moment he betray'd you,  
Betray'd you to this wily Queen of Scots.—

*Eliz.* O, she shall pay me for it with her blood!—  
Is the death-warrant ready?

*Bur.* 'Tis prepar'd  
As you commanded it.—

*Eliz.* Yes; she shall die—  
He shall behold her fall, and fall himself!  
I've driv'n him from my heart;—my favour's lost,  
Revenge alone employs me. High as once  
He stood, so low and shameful be his fall!  
A monument of my severity,  
As once the proud example of my weakness.  
Conduct him to the tow'r; let a commission

Be nam'd to try him. Yes! the worthless man  
Shall feel the utmost rigour of the law.

*Bur.* But he will seek thy presence; he will clear—

*Eliz.* How can he clear himself? does not the letter  
Convict him! O, his crimes are clear as day!

*Bur.* But thou art mild and gracious! his appearance,  
His pow'rful presence—

*Eliz.* I will never see him;  
No never, never more. Are orders giv'n  
Not to admit him should he come?

*Bur.* 'Tis done.

*Page.* [*entering.*] The Earl of Leicester—

*Eliz.* The presumptuous man!  
I will not see him;—tell him that I will not.

*Page.* I am afraid to bring my lord this message,  
Nor would he credit it.—

*Eliz.* I rais'd him then  
So high, that my own servants tremble more  
At him than me!

*Bur.* [*to the Page.*] The Queen forbids his presence.

[*the Page retires slowly.*]

*Eliz.* [*after a pause.*] Yet, if it still were possible?  
If he

Could clear himself? Might it not be a snare  
Laid by the cunning one, to sever me  
From my best friend—the treach'rous hyæna!  
She might have wrote the letter, but to raise  
Pois'nous suspicion in my heart, to ruin  
The man she hates.—

*Bur.* Yet, gracious Queen, consider—

*To them, Leicester. [Bursts open the door with violence,  
and enters with an imperious air.]*

*Lei.* Fain would I see the shameless man, who dares  
Forbid me the apartments of my Queen!—

*Eliz.* [*avoiding his sight.*] Audacious slave!—

*Lei.* To turn me from the door!—

If for a Burleigh she be visible,  
She is so too for me!

*Bur.* My lord, you are  
Too bold, without permission to intrude—

*Lei.* My lord, you are too arrogant, to take  
The lead in these apartments.—What! permission!  
I know of none, who stands so high at court

As to permit my doings, or refuse them.

[*humbly approaching Elizabeth.*]

'Tis from my Sov'reigns lips alone that I—

Eliz. [*without looking at him.*] Out of my sight,  
deceitful, worthless traitor!

Lei. 'Tis not my gracious Queen I hear, but  
Burleigh,

My enemy, in these unkind expressions.—

To my imperial mistress I appeal;

Thou hast lent him thy ear; I ask the like.—

Eliz. Speak, shameless wretch! increase your  
crime—deny it—

Lei. Dismiss me first this troublesome intruder.—

Withdraw, my lord; it is not of your office

To play the third man here: between the Queen

And me there is no need of witnesses.

Retire—

Eliz. [*to Burleigh.*] Remain, my lord; 'tis my  
command.

Lei. What has a third to do, 'twixt thee and me?

I have to clear myself before my Queen,

My worshipp'd Queen; I will maintain the rights

Which thou hast given me: these rights are sacred,



And I insist upon it that my lord  
Retire.—

*Eliz.* This haughty language well becomes you—

*Lei.* Yes, well it fits me; am not I the man,  
The happy man, to whom thy gracious favour  
Has giv'n the highest station; this exalts me  
Above this Burleigh, and above them all.  
Thy heart imparted me this rank, and what  
Thy favour gave, by heav'ns I will maintain  
At my life's hazard! let him go, it needs  
Two moments only to exculpate me.

*Eliz.* Think not, with cunning words, to hide the  
truth.

*Lei.* That fear from him, the everlasting talker;  
But what I say, is to the heart address'd;  
And I will justify what I've dar'd  
To do, confiding in thy gen'rous favour,  
Before thy heart alone. I recognize  
No other jurisdiction.—

*Eliz.* Base deceiver!

'Tis this, e'en this which above all condemns you.

My lord, produce the letter.

[to Burleigh.

*Bur.* Here it is.

*Lei.* [*running over the letter without losing his presence of mind.*] It's Mary Stuart's hand—

*Eliz.* Read, and be dumb !

*Lei.* [*having read it quietly.*] Appearance is against me ; yet I hope

I shall not by appearances be judg'd.

*Eliz.* Can you deny your secret correspondence With Mary ?—that *she* sent, and *you* receiv'd Her picture, that you gave her hopes of rescue ?

*Lei.* It were an easy matter, if I felt That I were guilty of a crime, to challenge The testimony of my enemy : Yet bold is my good conscience.—I confess That she has said the truth.—

*Eliz.* Well then, thou wretch !—

*Bur.* His own words sentence him—

*Eliz.* Out of my sight !

Away ! conduct the traitor to the tow'r !—

*Lei.* I am no traitor ; it was wrong, indeed, To make a secret of this step to *thee* ;— Yet pure was my intention, it was done To search into her plots and to confound them.—

*Eliz.* Vain subterfuge !—

*Bur.* And think you then, my lord—

*Lei.* I've play'd a dang'rous game, I know it well,  
And none but Leicester dare be bold enough  
To risk it at this court; the world must know  
How I detest this Stuart, and the rank  
Which here I hold, my Monarch's confidence,  
With which she honours me, must sure suffice  
To overturn all doubts of my intentions.  
Well may the man thy favour above all  
Distinguishes strike out a bolder way  
To do his duty!—

*Bur.* Was the way a good one?  
Why then conceal it?—

*Lei.* You are us'd, my lord,  
To prate before you act, the very chime  
Of your own deeds; this is your manner, lord;  
But mine, is first to act, and then to speak.

*Bur.* Yes; now you speak, because you must.—

*Lei.* [*measuring him proudly and disdainfully with his eyes.*] And you  
Boast of a wonderful, a mighty action,  
That *you* have sav'd the Queen, have snatch'd away  
The mask from treach'ry:—all is known to *you*;

You think, forsooth, that nothing can escape  
Your penetrating eyes :—poor, idle boaster !  
In spite of all your art, Maria Stuart  
Was free to day, had *I* not hinder'd it.—

*Bur.* How ? *you* ?—

*Lei.* Yes *I*, my lord : the Queen confided  
In Mortimer ; she open'd to the youth  
Her inmost soul ;—yes, she went farther still ;  
She gave him too a secret bloody charge,  
Which Paulet had before refus'd with horror.  
Say, is it so, or not ?—

*[the Queen and Burleigh look at one another, with  
astonishment.]*

*Bur.* Whence know you this ?

*Lei.* Is it not so ? Well then, my lord, where were  
Your thousand eyes, that you discover'd not  
That this same Mortimer was cheating you ;  
That he, the Guise's tool, and Mary's creature,  
A raging Papist, a resolv'd fanatic,  
Was come to rescue her, was come to murder  
The Queen of England !—

*Eliz.* *[with the utmost astonishment.]* How !—this  
Mortimer ?

*Lei.* 'Twas he through whom our correspondence  
pass'd ;

This plot it was which introduc'd me to him.  
This very day she was to have been torn  
From her confinement ; he, this very moment,  
Disclos'd to me his plan : I took him pris'ner,  
And gave him to the guard, when in despair  
To see his work o'erturn'd, himself unmask'd,  
He put himself to death !

*Eliz.* O, I have been  
Deceiv'd beyond example ! Mortimer !

*Bur.* This happen'd then but now ; now since we  
parted.

*Lei.* I must lament it now, for my own sake,  
That he was thus cut off ; his testimony,  
Had he but liv'd, had fully clear'd my fame,  
And freed me from suspicion :—'twas for this  
That I thus gave him up to open justice.  
I thought to choose the most impartial course  
To verify and fix before the world  
My innocence.—

*Bur.* He kill'd himself, you say :  
Is't so ? or did *you* kill him ?—

*Lei.* Vile suspicion !

Hear but the guard who seiz'd him.—

[*he goes to the door, and calls.*

Ho ! who waits ?

[*the officer of the guard comes.*

Sir, tell the Queen, how Mortimer expir'd.

*Officer.* I was upon my station in the palace,  
As my Lord Leicester sudden op'd the door,  
And order'd me to take the knight in charge,  
Declaring him a traitor : upon this  
He grew enrag'd, and with most bitter curses  
Against our sov'reign, and our holy faith,  
He drew a dagger, and before the guards  
Could hinder his intention, plung'd the steel  
Into his heart, and fell a lifeless corpse.

*Lei.* 'Tis well ; you may withdraw, her Majesty  
Has heard enough. [*the officer withdraws.*

*Eliz.* O ! what a deep abyss  
Of monstrous deeds !

*Lei.* Who was it then, my Queen,  
Who sav'd you ?—Was it Burleigh ? did he know  
The dangers which surrounded you ? did he  
Avert them from your head ?—Your faithful Leicester  
Was your good angel.—

*Bur.* This same Mortimer  
Died most conveniently for you, Lord Leicester.

*Eliz.* What I should say I know not; I believe you,  
And I believe you not :—I think you guilty,  
And I think you are not guilty. Curse on her  
Who caus'd me all this anguish !

*Lei.* She must die—  
I now insist myself upon her death.  
I formerly advis'd you to suspend  
The judgment, till some arm should rise anew  
For her protection ; now the case has happen'd,  
And I demand her instant execution.—

*Burl.* You give this counsel ?—*you* ?—

*Lei.* Howe'er it wound  
My feelings to be forc'd to this extreme,  
Yet now I see most clearly, now I feel  
That the Queen's welfare asks this bloody victim.  
'Tis my proposal, therefore, that the writ  
Be straight drawn up, to fix the execution.

*Bur.* [*to the Queen.*] Since then his lordship shews  
such earnest zeal,  
Such loyalty, 'twere well, were he appointed  
To see the execution of the sentence.—

*Lei.* Who?—I?—

*Bur.* Yes, *you*; you surely ne'er could find  
A better mean to shake off the suspicion,  
Which rests upon you still, than to command  
Her, whom 'tis said you love, to be beheaded.

*Eliz.* [*looking stedfastly at Leicester.*] My lord advises well :—so be it then.—

*Lei.* It were but fit that my exalted rank  
Should free me from so mournful a commission,  
Which would indeed, in ev'ry sense, become  
A Burleigh better than the Earl of Leicester.  
The man who stands so near the royal person  
Should have no knowledge of such fatal scenes ;  
But yet, to prove my zeal, to satisfy  
My Queen, I wave my charge's privilege,  
And take upon me this so hateful duty.

*Eliz.* Lord Burleigh shares with you this duty.

Let

[*to Burleigh.*

The warrant be prepar'd without delay.

[*Burleigh withdraws ; a tumult heard without.*



*The Queen, Leicester, the Earl of Kent.*

*Eliz.* How now, my lord of Kent? What's that disturbance

I hear without?—

*Kent.* My Queen, it is thy people,  
Which, rang'd around the palace, with impatience  
Demand to see their sovereign.

*Eliz.* What's their wish?

*Kent.* A panic terror has already spread  
Through London, that thy life has been attempted;  
That murderers commission'd from the Pope  
Beset thee; that the Catholics have sworn  
To rescue from her prison Mary Stuart,  
And to proclaim her Queen—thy loyal people  
Believe it, and are mad—her head alone  
Can quiet them—this day must be her last.

*Eliz.* How! will they force me then?—

*Kent.* They are resolv'd—

*To them, Burleigh and Davison, with a paper.*

*Eliz.* Well, Davison?

*Dav.* [*approaches earnestly.*] Your orders are obey'd,  
My Queen—

*Eliz.* What orders, Sir? [*as she is about to take the  
paper, she shudders, and starts back.*] O God!—

*Bur.* Obey

Thy people's voice; it is the voice of God.—

*Eliz.* [*irresolute, as if in contest with herself.*] O my  
good lord, who can now surely say

If what I hear's the voice of my whole people,

The meaning of the world; how much I fear,

That, if I now should listen to the wish

Of the majority, a diff'rent voice

Might soon be heard;—yes; that those very men,

Who now by force oblige me to this step,

May, when 'tis taken, heavily condemn me!

*To them, the Earl of Shrewsbury. [who enters with  
great emotion.]*

Hold fast, my Queen, they wish to hurry thee;

Be firm— *[seeing Davison with the Paper,*

Or is it then decided?—is it

Indeed decided? I behold a paper

Of ominous appearance in his hand;

Let it not at this moment meet thy eyes,

My Queen—

*Eliz.* Good Shrewsbury! I am constrain'd—

*Shrews.* Who can constrain thee? Thou art Queen  
of England,

Here must thy Majesty assert its rights:

Command those savage voices to be silent;

Who take upon themselves to put constraint

Upon thy royal will, to rule thy judgment.

Fear only, blind conjecture moves thy people;

Thou art thyself beside thyself; thy wrath

Is grievously provok'd: thou art but mortal,

Thou canst not thus ascend the seat of judgment.

*Bur.* Judgment has long been past; it is not now  
The time to speak, but execute the sentence.

*Kent.* [*who, on Shrewsbury's entry, had retired, comes back.*] The tumult gains apace; there are no means  
To moderate the people.—

*Eliz.* [*to Shrewsbury.*] See, my lord,  
How they press on.—

*Shrews.* I only ask a respite;  
A single word trac'd by thy hand may scare  
The peace, the happiness of thy existence!  
Thou hast for years consider'd, let not then  
A moment rul'd by passion hurry thee—  
But a short respite—recollect thyself;  
Wait for a moment of tranquillity.—

*Bur.* [*violently.*] Wait for it—pause—delay—till  
flames of fire  
Consume the realm; until the fifth attempt  
Of murder be successful! God indeed  
Hath thrice deliver'd thee; thy late escape  
Was marvellous, and to expect again  
A miracle would be to tempt thy God!

*Shrews.* That God, whose potent hand hath thrice  
preserv'd thee,

Who lent my aged feeble arm the strength  
 To overcome the madman ; *he* deserves  
 Thy confidence. I will not raise the voice  
 Of justice now, for now is not the time ;  
 Thou canst not hear it in this storm of passion.  
 Yet listen but to this : thou tremblest now  
 Before this living Mary—tremble rather  
 Before the murder'd, the beheaded Mary.  
 She will arise, and quit her grave, will range  
 A fiend of discord, and a spirit of vengeance  
 Around thy realm, and turn thy people's hearts  
 From their allegiance. As yet the Britons  
 Hate her, because they fear her ; but most surely  
 They will avenge her, when she is no more.  
 They will no more behold the enemy  
 Of their belief, they will but see in her  
 The much-lamented issue of their kings  
 A sacrifice to jealousy and hatred.  
 Then quickly shalt thou see the sudden change,  
 When thou hast done the bloody deed ; then go  
 Through London, seek thy people, which till now  
 Delighted swarm'd around thee ; thou shalt see  
 Another England, and another people ;

For then no more the godlike dignity  
 Of justice, which subdued thy subjects' hearts,  
 Will beam around thee; Fear, the dread attendant  
 Of tyranny, will shudd'ring march before thee,  
 And desolate each path on which thou go'st!—  
 The last, extremest crime thou hast committed.  
 What head is safe, if the anointed fall?

*Eliz.* Ah! Shrewsbury, you sav'd my life, you  
 turn'd

The murd'rous steel aside; why let you not  
 The dagger take its course? then all contentions  
 Would have been ended, then releas'd from doubt,  
 And free from blame, I should be now at rest  
 In my still peaceful grave.—Forsooth with reason  
 I'm weary of my life, and of my crown.  
 If one of us must perish to secure  
 The other's life, and so it is, I must  
 Acknowledge it, cannot then I be she  
 Who yields? Then let my people take their choice;  
 I give them back their Majesty, and call  
 My God to witness, that I have not liv'd  
 For my own sake, but for my people's welfare.  
 If they expect from this false, fawning Stuart,

The younger sovereign, more happy days,  
 I will descend with pleasure from this throne,  
 Again repair to Woodstock's quiet bow'rs,  
 Where once I spent my unpretending youth;  
 Where I, remov'd from all the vanities  
 Of earthly greatness, found within myself  
 True Majesty. I am not made to rule—  
 A ruler should be made of sterner stuff:  
 My heart is soft and tender. I have govern'd  
 These many years, this kingdom happily,  
 But then I only needed to make happy;  
 Now, comes the first important kingly duty,  
 And now I feel my weakness. Go, my lords—

*Bur.* Now by my faith, when I must hear my Queen,  
 My royal liege, speak such unroyal words,  
 I should betray my office, should betray  
 My country, were I longer to be silent.  
 Thou say'st thou lov'st above thyself thy people,  
 Now prove it; choose not peace for thy own heart,  
 And leave thy people to the storms of discord.  
 Think on the church; shall, with this Papist-Queen,  
 The ancient superstition be renew'd?  
 The monks rule here again, the Roman legate

In pomp march hither ; lock our churches up,  
 Dethrone our monarchs ?—I demand of thee  
 The souls of all thy subjects—as thou now  
 Shalt act, they all are sav'd, or all are lost !  
 Here is no time for mercy ; to promote  
 Thy people's welfare is thy highest duty.—  
 Well then—If Shrewsbury sav'd thy life, I too  
 Will save both thee, and England, that is more.—

*Eliz.* I would be left alone: no consolation,  
 No counsel can be drawn in this conjuncture  
 From human wisdom :—I will lay my doubts  
 Before the highest judge :—I am resolv'd  
 To act as he directs. Withdraw, my lords.

*[to Davison, who lays the paper on the table.]*

You, Sir, remain in waiting—go not far.

*[the Lords withdraw; Shrewsbury alone stands for a few moments before the Queen, regards her significantly, then withdraws slowly, and with an expression of the deepest anguish.]*

*Elizabeth, alone.*

O, servitude of popularity !  
 Disgraceful slavery ! how weary am I



Of flattering this idol, which my soul  
 Despises ! when shall I again be free  
 Upon this throne ? the public voice I must  
 Respect ; to gain the multitude's applause  
 I must abase myself, must suit my actions  
 To please the fancies of a mob, which nought  
 But jugglers' tricks delight.—O call not him  
 A king, who's forc'd to please the world, 'tis he  
 Alone, who in his actions need not count  
 The fickle approbation of mankind.—  
 Have I then practis'd justice, all my life  
 Shunn'd each despotic deed ; have I done this,  
 Only to bind my hands against this first,  
 This necessary act of violence ?  
 The example, which I gave myself, condemns me :  
 Had I but been a tyrant, like my sister,  
 My predecessor, I could fearless then  
 Have shed this royal blood :—but was I then  
 Just by my own free choice ?—no—I was forc'd  
 By stern necessity to use this virtue ;  
 Necessity, which binds e'en monarchs' wills.  
 Surrounded by my foes, my people's love  
 Alone supports me on my envied throne.

All pow'rs of Europe seek but my destruction ;  
 The Pope's inveterate decree declares me  
 Accurst and excommunicated.—France  
 Betrays me with a kiss, and Spain prepares  
 At sea a fierce exterminating war :  
 Thus stand I, in contention with the world,  
 A poor defenceless woman: I must seek  
 To hide the spot in my imperial birth,  
 By which my Father once himself disgrac'd me :  
 In vain with princely virtues would I hide it ;  
 The envious hatred of my enemies  
 Uncovers it, and places Mary Stuart  
 Before me an eternal threat'ning fiend !

*[walking up and down, with quick and agitated steps.]*

O no! this fear must end ; her head must fall :  
 I *will* have peace—she is the very fury  
 Of my existence ; a tormenting dæmon,  
 Which destiny has fasten'd on my soul.  
 Wherever I had planted me a comfort,  
 A flatt'ring hope, my way was ever cross'd  
 By this infernal viper !—she has torn  
 My fav'rite from me, and my bridegroom too ;  
 The hated name of ev'ry ill I feel

Is Mary Stuart.—be but she no more  
On earth, I shall be free as mountain air.

*[standing still.*

With what disdain did she look down on me;  
As if her eye should blast me like the lightning !  
Poor feeble wretch ! I bear far other arms,  
Their touch is mortal, and thou art no more.

*[advancing to the table with hasty strides, and taking  
the pen.*

Thou say'st I am a bastard—well—a bastard—  
Thy death may make my birth legitimate.  
The moment I destroy thee, is the doubt  
Destroy'd, which hangs o'er my imperial right.  
As soon as England has no other choice,  
My mother's honour and my birth-right triumphs !

*[she signs with resolution ; lets her pen then fall,  
and steps back with an expression of terror.—  
After a pause, she rings.*

*Elizabeth, Davison.*

*Eliz.* Where are their lordships ?—  
*Dav.* They are gone to quell

The tumult of the people :—the alarm  
 Was instantly appeas'd, as they beheld  
 The Earl of Shrewsbury ; that's he ! exclaim'd  
 An hundred voices—that's the man—he sav'd  
 The Queen ; hear *him*—the noblest man in England !  
 And now began the gallant Talbot, blam'd  
 In gentle words the people's violence,  
 And spoke so strong, so forcibly persuasive,  
 That all were pacified, and silently  
 They stole away.—

*Eliz.* The fickle multitude !  
 Which turns with ev'ry wind.—Unhappy he  
 Who leans upon this reed !—'Tis well, Sir William ;  
 You may retire again— [*as he is going towards the door.*]  
 And, Sir, this Paper,  
 Receive it back ; I place it in your hands.

*Dav.* [*casts a look upon the Paper, and starts back.*]  
 My gracious Queen—thy name !—'tis then decided.

*Eliz.* I had but to subscribe it—I have done so—  
 A paper sure cannot decide—a name  
 Kills not—

*Dav.* Thy name, my Queen, beneath this Paper,  
 Is most decisive—kills—'tis like the lightning,

Which takes its flight, and blasts! this fatal scroll  
 Commands the Sheriff and Commissioners  
 Straight to proceed to Fotheringay-castle,  
 And to announce unto the Queen of Scots  
 Her death, which sentence must be executed  
 E'er the next morning breaks. Here is no respite—  
 As soon as I have parted with this writ,  
 Her race is run—

*Eliz.* Yes, Sir, the Lord has plac'd  
 This weighty bus'ness in your feeble hands;  
 Seek him in pray'r, to light you with his wisdom;  
 I go—and leave you, Sir, to do your duty.— [*going.*]

*Dav.* No; leave me not, my Queen, till I have  
 heard

Your will; the only wisdom that I need,  
 Is, word for word, to follow your commands.  
 Say, have you plac'd this Paper in my hands,  
 To put it into instant execution?

*Eliz.* That you must do, as your own prudence  
 dictates.

*Dav.* [*interrupting her quickly, and alarmed.*] Not  
 mine—O God forbid! my only prudence  
 Is my obedience.—No point must here

Be left to be decided by your servant ;  
 A small mistake would here be regicide,  
 A monstrous crime, a crime past all expression !  
 Permit me, in this weighty act, to be  
 Your passive instrument, without a will ;—  
 Tell me in plain undoubted terms your pleasure,  
 What with the bloody mandate I should do.—

*Eliz.* Its name declares its meaning.—

*Dav.* Will you then,

That it should instantly be executed ?

*Eliz.* I said not that ; I tremble but to think it.—

*Dav.* That I should keep it then 'till further  
 orders ?—

*Eliz.* At your own risk ; you answer the event.—

*Dav.* I !—God in heav'n !—O speak, my Queen,  
 your pleasure !—

*Eliz.* My pleasure is, that this unhappy bus'ness  
 Be no more mention'd to me ; that at last  
 I may be freed from it, and that for ever.—

*Dav.* It costs you but a word—determine then ;  
 What shall I do with this mysterious scroll ?

*Eliz.* I *have* declar'd it—plague me then no  
 longer.—

*Dav.* You *have* declar'd it? say you? O, my Queen,

You have said nothing; please my gracious mistress  
But to remember—

*Eliz.* [*stamps on the ground.*] Insupportable!

*Dav.* O, be indulgent to me!—I have enter'd  
Unwittingly, not many months ago,  
This weighty office; I know not the language  
Of courts and kings; I ever have been rear'd  
In simple, open wise, a plain blunt man.—  
Be patient with me; nor deny your servant  
A light to lead him clearly to his duty.

*[he approaches her in a supplicating posture, she  
turns her back on him; he stands in despair:  
then speaks with a tone of resolution.]*

Take, take again this paper—take it back—  
Within my hands, it is a glowing fire.  
Select not me, my Queen; select not me  
To serve you, in this terrible conjuncture.

*Eliz.* Go, Sir;—fulfil the duty of your office!

[*Exit.*]

*Davison, then Burleigh.*

*Dav.* She goes—she leaves me doubting, and perplex'd

With this dread paper!—how to act I know not;  
Should I retain it, should I forward it?

*[to Burleigh, who enters.]*

Oh! it is well that you are here, my Lord,  
'Tis you who have preferr'd me to this charge;  
Now free me from it, for I undertook it,  
Unknowing how responsible it made me.  
Let me then seek again the solitude,  
In which you found me; this is not my place.

*Bur.* How now? take courage, Sir; where is the warrant?—

The Queen was with you.

*Dav.* She has quitted me  
In bitter anger.—O advise me, help me,  
Save me from this fell agony of doubt!  
My Lord, here is the warrant: it is sign'd!—

*Bur.* Indeed?—O give it, give it me.—



*Dav.* I may not.—

*Bur.* How !—

*Dav.* She has not as yet explain'd her pleasure.

*Bur.* Explain'd ! She has subscrib'd it ;—give it  
me.—

*Dav.* I am to execute it—I am not  
To execute it—God ! I know not what !

*Bur.* [*urging more violently.*] It must be now, this  
moment, executed—

The warrant, Sir ; you're lost if you delay.—

*Dav.* So am I also, if I act too rashly.—

*Bur.* What strange infatuation ! give it me.

*[snatches the paper from him, and goes off with it.]*

*Dav.* What mean you ?—stop—you plunge me  
in destruction !

## ACT V.

THE SCENE THE SAME AS IN THE FIRST ACT.

*Hannah Kennedy in deep mourning, her eyes still red from weeping, in great but quiet anguish, is employed in sealing letters and parcels. Her sorrow often interrupts her occupation, and she is seen at such intervals to pray in silence. Paulet and Drury, also in mourning, enter, followed by many servants, who bear golden and silver vessels, mirrors, paintings, and other valuables, and fill the back part of the stage with them: Paulet delivers to the Nurse a box of jewels and a paper, and seems to inform her by signs, that it contains the inventory of the effects the Queen had brought with her. At the sight of these riches, the anguish of the Nurse is renewed; she sinks into a deep, gloomy melancholy, during which Drury, Paulet, and the Servants, silently retire.*

*Melvil enters.*

KENNEDY. [*screams aloud, as soon as she observes him.*]

MELVIL! is't you? behold I you again?

Mel. Yes, faithful Kennedy, we meet again.

*Ken.* After this long, long, painful separation !

*Mel.* A most deplorable, most painful meeting !

*Ken.* You come—

*Mel.* To take an everlasting leave,

To bid the last farewell to my dear Queen :

*Ken.* And now at length, now on the fatal morn

Which brings her death, they grant our royal lady

The presence of her friends.—O, worthy Sir,

I will not question you how you have far'd,

Will not tell you the suff'rings which we suffer'd,

Since you were torn away from us:—alas !

There will be time enough for this hereafter.

O, Melvil, Melvil, why was it our fate

To see the dawn of this unhappy day !

*Mel.* Let us not melt each other with our grief,—

Throughout my whole remaining life, as long

As ever it may be, I'll sit and weep ;

A smile shall never more light up these cheeks,

This sable garment never will I more

Lay off, will live in everlasting mourning ;

But this one day, will I be firm ; and you,

Pledge me your faith to moderate your sorrow ;

And when the others, all depriv'd of comfort,

Abandon'd to despair wail round her, *we*  
 Will lead her with heroic resolution,  
 And be her staff upon the road to death !

*Ken.* Melvil ! You are deceiv'd, if you suppose  
 The Queen has need of our support to meet  
 Her death with firmness.—*She* it is, my friend,  
 Who will present us with the fair example  
 Of noble courage ; trust me, Mary Stuart  
 Will as a queen, and heroine expire !

*Mel.* Receiv'd she then with firmness, the sad  
 tidings  
 Of death?—'tis said that she was not prepar'd.

*Ken.* She was not ; yet they were far other terrors  
 Which made our lady shudder : 'twas not death,  
 But her deliv'rer, which made her tremble.  
 Freedom, was promis'd us ; this very night  
 Had Mortimer engag'd to bear us hence :  
 And thus the Queen, perplex'd 'twixt hope and fear,  
 And doubting still if she should trust her honour  
 And royal person to th' advent'rous youth,  
 Sat waiting for the morning ;—on a sudden  
 We hear a boist'rous tumult in the castle ;  
 Our ears are startled by repeated blows

Of many hammers, and we think we hear  
 The approach of our deliv'ers;—hope salutes us,  
 And suddenly and unresisted, wakes  
 The sweet desire of life.—And now at once  
 The portals are thrown open—it is Paulet,  
 Who comes to tell us—that the carpenters  
 Erect beneath our feet the murd'rous scaffold!—

*[she turns aside, overpowered by excessive anguish.]*

*Mel.* O God in Heav'n! O tell me then, how bore  
 The Queen this terrible vicissitude?

*Ken.* *[after a pause, in which she has somewhat collected herself.]* Not by degrees can we relinquish  
 life;

Quick, sudden, in the twinkling of an eye  
 The separation must be made, the change  
 From temp'ral, to eternal life;—and God  
 Imparted to our mistress at this moment  
 His grace, to cast away each earthly hope,  
 And firm and full of faith to mount the skies.  
 No sign of pallid fear dishonour'd her;  
 No word of mourning, 'till she heard the tidings  
 Of Leicester's shameful treach'ry, the sad fate  
 Of the deserving youth, who sacrific'd

Himself for her : the deep, the heartfelt anguish  
Of the old knight, who lost, through her, his last,  
His only hope; till then she shed no tear,—  
'Twas then her tears began to flow, 'twas not  
Her own, 'twas other's woe which forc'd them from her.

*Mel.* Where is she now ? Can you not lead me to  
her ?

*Ken.* She spent the last remainder of the night  
In pray'r, and from her dearest friends she took  
Her last farewell in writing:—then she wrote  
Her will with her own hand. She now enjoys  
A moment of repose, the latest slumber  
Refreshes her weak spirits.—

*Mel.* Who attends her ?

*Ken.* None but her women and physician Burgoyne :  
You seem to look around you with surprise ;  
Your eyes appear to ask me what should mean  
This shew of splendour in the house of death.—  
O, Sir, we suffer'd in our life-time want ;  
With death alone returns abundance to us.

*To them, Margaret Curl.*

*Ken.* How, madam, fares the Queen? Is she awake?

*Curl.* [*drying her tears.*] She is already drest—she asks for you.—

*Ken.* I go;— [*to Melvil, who seems to wish to accompany her.*] But follow not, until the Queen Has been prepar'd to see you.— [*she goes.*]

*Curl.* Melvil, sure,  
The ancient steward?—

*Mel.* Yes; tis he.—

*Curl.* O, Sir,  
This is a house which needs no steward now!  
Melvil, you come from London; can you give  
No tidings of my husband?—

*Mel.* It is said  
He will be set at liberty, as soon—

*Curl.* As soon as our dear Queen shall be no more.—  
O, the unworthy, the disgraceful traitor!  
He is our Lady's murderer—'tis said  
It was his testimony which condemn'd her.

*Mel.* 'Tis true.—

*Curl.* O, curse upon him!—be his soul  
Condemn'd for ever!—he has borne false witness—

*Mel.* Think, madam, what you say.—

*Curl.* I will maintain it  
With ev'ry sacred oath, before the court,  
I will repeat it in his very face ;  
The world shall hear of nothing else.—I say  
That she dies innocent!—

*Mel.* God grant it true!

*To them, Hannah Kennedy.*

*Ken.* [*to Curl.*] Go, madam, and require a cup of  
wine—

'Tis for our lady.—

*Mel.* Is the Queen then sick?

*Ken.* She thinks that she is strong ; she is deceiv'd  
By her heroic courage ; she believes  
She has no need of nourishment ; yet still  
A hard and painful task 's allotted her.  
Her enemies shall not enjoy the triumph ;



They shall not say that fear hath bleach'd her cheeks,  
When her fatigues have conquer'd human weakness.

*Mel.* May I approach her?—

*Ken.* She will come herself.

*To them, Burgoyne. [two women of the chamber follow him,  
weeping, and in deep mourning.]*

*Burg.* O, Melvil!—

*Mel.* O, Burgoyne! *[they embrace silently.]*

*First Woman. [to the Nurse.]* She chose to be  
Alone:—she wishes, at this awful moment,  
For the last time, to commune with her God.

*To them, Margaret Curl, bearing a golden cup of wine;  
she places it hastily upon the table, and leans, pale and  
trembling, against a chair.*

*Mel.* How, madam! what has frighten'd you?

*Ken.* O God!

*Burg.* Speak, madam.—

*Curl.* What, alas ! have I beheld !

*Mel.* Come to yourself, and say what you have seen !

*Curl.* As I went down the staircase which conducts  
To the great hall below, a door stood open ;  
I look'd into the chamber, and I saw—  
O God !—

*Mel.* What saw you ?—

*Curl.* All the walls were cover'd  
With black ; a spacious scaffold too o'erspread  
With sable cloth, was rais'd above the floor,  
And in the middle of the scaffold stood  
A dreadful sable block !—upon it lay  
A naked, polish'd axe :—the hall was full  
Of cruel people, crowding round the scaffold ;  
Who, with a horrid thirst for human blood,  
Seem'd waiting for the victim !—

*The Women.* God in Heav'n  
Protect our Queen !—

*Mel.* Be calm ; the Queen approaches

*To them, Mary in white and sumptuously arrayed, as for a festival: she wears hanging from her neck, on a row of small beads, an Agnus Dei; a rosary hangs from her girdle; she bears a crucifix in her hand, and a diadem of precious stones binds her hair; her large black veil is thrown back. On her entrance, all present fall back on both sides with the most violent expressions of anguish. Melvil falls involuntarily upon his knees.*

Mary. [with quiet majesty, looking round the whole circle.] Why these complaints? why weep ye? ye should rather

Rejoice with me, that now at length the end  
Of my long woe approaches; that my shackles  
Fall off, my prison opens, and my soul  
Delighted mounts on seraph's wings, and seeks  
The land of everlasting liberty.

When I was offer'd up to the oppression  
Of my proud enemy, was forc'd to suffer  
Ignoble taunts, and what is not becoming  
A free and sov'reign Queen, then was the time

To weep for me ; but, as an earnest friend,  
 Beneficent and healing death approaches.  
 All the indignities which I have suffer'd  
 On earth, are cover'd by his sable wings.  
 The most degraded criminal's ennobled  
 By his last sufferings, by his final exit ;  
 I feel again the crown upon my brows.  
 And dignity possess my gen'rous soul !

*[advancing a few steps.]*

How ! Melvil here !—my worthy Sir, not so ;  
 Arise ; you rather come in time to see  
 The triumph of your mistress, than her death.  
 One comfort, which I never had expected,  
 Is granted me ; that, after death, my name  
 Will not be quite abandon'd to my foes ;  
 One friend at least, one partner of my faith,  
 Will be my witness in the hour of death.  
 Say, honest Melvil, how you far'd the while  
 In this inhospitable, hostile land ?  
 For since the time they tore you from my side,  
 My fears for you have oft depress'd my soul.

*Mel.* No other evil gall'd me, but my anguish  
 For thee, and that I wanted pow'r to serve thee.

*Mary.* How fares old Didier, my chamberlain?  
But sure the faithful servant long has slept  
The sleep of death, for he was full of years.—

*Mel.* God hath not granted him as yet this grace;  
He lives to see the grave o'erwhelm thy youth.

*Mary.* O! Could I but have felt before my  
death,

The happiness of pressing one descendant  
Of the dear blood of Stuart to my bosom.

But I must suffer in a foreign land,  
None but my servants to bewail my fate!

Sir; to your loyal bosom I commit  
My latest wishes—bear then, Sir, my blessing  
To the most Christian king, my royal brother,  
And the whole royal family of France.

I bless the Cardinal, my honour'd uncle,  
And also Henry Guise, my noble cousin.—

I bless the holy Father, the vicegerent  
Of Christ on earth, who will, I trust, bless me.—

I bless the king of Spain, who nobly offer'd  
Himself as my deliv'rer, my avenger.

They are remember'd in my will: I hope  
That they will not despise, how poor soe'er

They be, the presents of a heart which loves them.

*[turning to her servants.]*

I have bequeath'd you to my royal brother  
Of France; he will protect you, he will give you  
Another country, and a better home ;  
And if my last desire have any weight,  
Stay not in England; let no haughty Briton  
Glut his proud heart with your calamities,  
Nor see those in the dust, who once were mine.  
Swear by this image of our suff'ring Lord,  
To leave this fatal land, when I'm no more.

Mel. *[touching the crucifix.]* I swear obedience, in  
the name of all.

Mary. What I, though poor and plunder'd, still  
possess,

Of which I am allow'd to make disposal,  
Shall be 'mongst you divided ; for I hope,  
In this at least, my will may be fulfill'd.  
What too I wear upon the path of death,  
Is yours—nor envy me on this occasion,  
The pomp of earth upon the road to heav'n.

*[to the ladies of her chamber.]*

To you, my Alice, Gertrude, Rosamund,

I leave my pearls, my garments : ye are young,  
 And you may still be pleas'd with ornament.  
 You, Marg'ret, have on me the nearest claims,  
 To you I should be gen'rous : for I leave you  
 The most unhappy woman of them all.  
 That I have not aveng'd your husband's fault  
 On you, I hope my legacy will prove.—  
 The worth of gold, my Hannah, charms not thee;  
 Nor the magnificence of precious stones :  
 My memory, I know it, is to thee  
 The dearest jewel ; take this handkerchief,  
 I work'd it for thee, in the hours of sorrow,  
 With my own hands, and my hot scalding tears  
 Are woven in the texture :—you will bind  
 My eyes with this, when it is time : this last  
 Sad service I would wish but from my Hannah.

*Ken.* O Melvil ! I cannot support it.—

*Mary.* Come,

Come all then, and receive my last farewell.

*[she stretches forth her hands ; the women violently weeping, fall successively at her feet, and kiss her outstretched hand.]*

Marg'ret, farewell—my Alice, fare thee well ;

Thanks Burgoyne, for thy honest faithful service—  
 Thy lips are hot, my Gertrude :—I have been  
 Much hated, yet have been as much belov'd.—  
 May a deserving husband bless my Gertrude,  
 For this warm glowing heart is form'd for love.—  
 Bertha, thy choice is better, thou hadst rather  
 Become the chaste and pious bride of heav'n ;—  
 O ! haste thee to fulfil thy vows ;—the goods  
 Of earth are all deceitful ;—thou may'st learn  
 This lesson from thy Queen.—No more ; farewell,  
 Farewell, farewell, my friends, farewell for ever.

*[she turns suddenly from them ; all but Melvil retire  
 at different sides.]*

*Mary, Melvil.*

Mary. *[after the others are all gone.]* I have ar-  
 rang'd all temporal concerns,  
 And hope to leave the world in debt to none ;  
 Melvil, one thought alone there is, which binds  
 My troubled soul, nor suffers it to fly  
 Delighted, and at liberty, to heav'n.

*Mel.* Disclose it to me ; ease your bosom, trust  
 Your doubts, your sorrows to your faithful friend.



*Mary.* I see eternity's abyss before me ;—  
 Soon must I stand before the highest judge,  
 And have not yet appear'd the holy one.—  
 A priest of my religion is denied me,  
 And I disdain to take the sacrament,  
 The holy, heav'nly nourishment, from priests  
 Of a false faith; I die in the belief  
 Of my own church, for that alone can save.

*Mel.* Compose your heart; the fervent pious wish  
 Is priz'd in heav'n as high as the performance.  
 The might of tyrants can but bind the hands,  
 The heart's devotion rises free to God,  
 The word is dead—'tis faith which brings to life.

*Mary.* The heart is not sufficient of itself;  
 Our faith must have some earthly pledge to ground  
 Its claims to the high bliss of heav'n. For this  
 Our God became incarnate, and inclos'd  
 Mysteriously his unseen heav'nly grace  
 Within the outward figure of a body.  
 The church it is, the holy one, the high one,  
 Which rears for us the ladder up to heav'n :—  
 'Tis call'd the general, the Catholic church,  
 For 'tis but gen'ral faith can strengthen faith;

Where thousands worship and adore, the heat  
 Breaks out in flame, and borne on eagle wings,  
 The soul mounts upwards to the heav'n of heav'ns.  
 Ah! happy they, who for the glad communion  
 Of pious pray'r, meet in the house of God!  
 The altar is adorn'd, the tapers blaze,  
 The bell invites, the incense smokes around,  
 The bishop stands enrob'd, he takes the cup,  
 And blessing it, declares the solemn marvel,  
 The transformation of the elements;  
 And the believing people fall delighted  
 To worship and adore the present Godhead.  
 Alas!—I only am debarr'd from this;  
 The heav'nly benediction pierces not  
 My prison walls: its comfort is denied me.

*Mel.* Yes! it can pierce them—put thy trust in  
 him

Who is almighty—in the hand of faith,  
 The wither'd staff can send forth verdant branches;  
 And he who from the rock call'd living water,  
 He can prepare an altar in this prison,  
 Can change—

*[seizing the cup, which stands upon the table.]*

The earthly contents of this cup  
Into a substance of celestial grace.

*Mary. Melvil!*—O yes, I understand you, Melvil!  
Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament;  
But the Redeemer says, “When two or three,  
Are in my name assembled, I am with them.”  
What consecrates the priest?—say, what ordains  
him

To be the Lord's interpreter?—a heart  
Devoid of guile, and a reproachless conduct.  
Well then, though unordain'd, be you my priest;  
To you will I confide my last confession,  
And take my absolution from your lips.

*Mel.* If then thy heart be with such zeal inflam'd;  
I tell thee, that for thy special comfort,  
The Lord may work a miracle. Thou say'st  
Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament—  
Thou err'st—here *is* a priest—here *is* a God;  
A god descends to thee in real presence.

*[at these words he uncovers his head, and shews a  
host in a golden vessel.]*

I am a priest—to hear thy last confession,  
And to announce to thee the peace of God

Upon thy way to death. I have receiv'd  
 Upon my head the seven consecrations.  
 I bring thee, from his Holiness, this host,  
 Which, for thy use, himself has deign'd to bless.

*Mary.* Is then a heav'nly happiness prepar'd  
 To cheer me on the very verge of death!  
 As an immortal one on golden clouds  
 Descends, as once the angel from on high,  
 Deliver'd the Apostle from his fetters:—  
 He scorns all bars, he scorns the soldier's sword,  
 He steps undaunted through the bolted portals,  
 And fills the dungeon with his native glory;  
 Thus here the messenger of Heav'n appears,  
 When ev'ry earthly champion had deceiv'd me.  
 And you, my serviant once, are now the servant  
 Of the most high, and his immortal word!—  
 As before *me* your knees were wont to bend,  
 Now humbled before *you*, I kiss the dust.

*[she sinks before him on her knees.]*

*Mel.* *[making over her the sign of the cross.]* Hear,

Mary Queen of Scotland:—In the name  
 Of God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost,  
 Hast thou examin'd carefully thy heart,

Swear'st thou, art thou prepar'd in thy confession  
To speak the truth before the God of truth?

*Mary.* Before my God and thee, my heart lies  
open.

*Mel.* What calls thee to the presence of the Highest!

*Mary.* I humbly do acknowledge to have err'd  
Most grievously, I tremble to approach,  
Sullied with sin, the God of purity.

*Mel.* Declare the sin which weighs so heavily  
Upon thy conscience, since thy last confession,

*Mary.* My heart was fill'd with thoughts of envious  
hate,

And vengeance took possession of my bosom.  
I hope forgiveness of my sins from God,  
Yet could I not forgive my enemy.

*Mel.* Repent'st thou of the sin?—art thou, in sooth,  
Resolv'd to leave this world at peace with all?

*Mary.* As surely as I wish the joys of heav'n.

*Mel.* What other sin hath arm'd thy heart against  
thee?

*Mary.* Ah! not alone through hate; through law-  
less love

Have I still more abus'd the sov'reign good.—

My heart was vainly turn'd towards the man,  
Who left me in misfortune, who deceiv'd me.

*Mel.* Repent'st thou of the sin? and hast thou  
turn'd

Thy heart, from this idolatry, to God?

*Mary.* It was the hardest trial I have pass'd;  
This last of earthly bands is torn asunder.

*Mel.* What other sin disturbs thy guilty conscience?

*Mary.* A bloody crime, indeed of antient date,  
And long ago confess'd; yet with new terrors,  
It now attacks me, black and grisly steps  
Across my path, and shuts the gates of heav'n :—  
By my connivance fell the king, my husband—  
I gave my hand and heart to a seducer—  
By rigid penance I have made atonement;  
Yet in my soul the worm is still awake.

*Mel.* Has then thy heart no other accusation,  
Which hath not been confess'd and wash'd away?

*Mary.* All you have heard, with which my heart is  
charg'd.

*Mel.* Think on the presence of omniscience ;—  
Think on the punishments, with which the church  
Threatens imperfect, and reserv'd confession!

This is the sin to everlasting death,  
For this is sinning 'gainst his holy spirit.

*Mary.* So may eternal grace with victory  
Crown my last contest, as I wittingly  
Have nothing hid—

*Mel.* How? wilt thou then conceal  
The crime from God, for which thou art condemn'd?  
Thou tell'st me nothing of the share thou had'st,  
In Babington's, and Parry's bloody treason :  
Thou diest for this a temp'ral death, for this  
Wilt thou too die the everlasting death?

*Mary.* I am prepar'd to meet eternity ;—  
Within the narrow limits of an hour,  
I shall appear before my judge's throne ;—  
But, I repeat it, my confession's ended.

*Mel.* Consider well—the heart is a deceiver.—  
Thou hast perhaps, with sly equivocation,  
The *word* avoided, which would make thee guilty,  
Although thy will was party to the crime.  
Remember, that no juggler's tricks can blind  
The eye of fire which darts through ev'ry breast.

*Mary.* 'Tis true, that I have call'd upon all  
princes

To free me from unworthy chains; yet 'tis  
As true, that neither by intent or deed,  
I have attempted my oppressor's life.

*Mel.* Your secretaries then have witness'd falsely.

*Mary.* It is, as I have said;—what they have  
witness'd

The Lord will judge.—

*Mel.* Thou mount'st then, satisfied  
Of thy own innocence, the bloody scaffold?

*Mary.* God suffers me in mercy to atone  
By undeserved death, my youth's transgressions.

*Mel.* [*making over her the sign of the cross.*] Go then,  
and expiate them all by death;—

Sink a devoted victim on the altar,—

Thus shall thy blood atone the blood thou  
spill'dst.

From female frailty were deriv'd thy faults,

Free from the weakness of mortality,

The spotless spirit seeks the blest abodes.

Now then, by the authority which God

Hath unto me committed, I absolve thee

From all thy sins—be as thy faith thy welfare!

[*he gives her the host.*]



Receive the body which for thee was offer'd—

*[he takes the cup which stands upon the table, consecrates it with silent prayer, then presents it to her ; she hesitates to take it, and makes signs to him to withdraw it.]*

Receive the blood, which for thy sins was shed—

Receive it—'tis allow'd thee by the Pope,

To exercise in death the highest office

Of kings, the holy office of the priesthood.

*[she takes the cup.]*

And as thou now in this his earthly body

Hast held with God mysterious communion,

So may'st thou henceforth, in his realm of joy,

Where sin no more exists, nor tears of woe,

A fair transfigur'd spirit, join thyself

For ever with the Godhead, and for ever.

*[he sets down the cup ; hearing a noise, he covers his head, and goes to the door ; Mary remains in silent devotion, on her knees.]*

Mel. *[returning.]* A painful conflict is in store for thee ;

Feel'st thou within thee strength enough to smother

Each impulse of malignity and hate ?

*Mary.* I fear not a relapse ; I have devoted  
My hatred, and my love to God.—

*Mel.* Well then  
Prepare thee to receive the Earl of Leicester,  
And the Lord Treasurer ; they are arriv'd.

*To them, Burleigh, Leicester, and Paulet. [Leicester  
remains in the back ground, without raising his eyes ;  
Burleigh, who remarks his confusion, steps between him  
and the Queen.]*

*Bur.* I come, my Lady Stuart, to receive  
Your last commands and wishes.

*Mary.* Thanks, my Lord.

*Bur.* It is the pleasure of my royal mistress,  
That nothing reasonable be denied you.

*Mary.* My will, my Lord, declares my last desires ;  
I laid it in the hand of Sir Amias,  
And humbly beg, that it may be fulfill'd.

*Paul.* Depend upon it.—

*Mary.* And I beg permission  
For all my servants to return to France,  
Or Scotland undisturb'd, as they may wish.

*Bur.* It shall be done.

*Mary.* And since my body here  
Is not to rest in consecrated ground,  
I pray you suffer this my faithful servant  
To bear my heart to France, to my relations—  
Alas! 'twas ever there.—

*Bur.* All shall be done  
According to your wishes.

*Mary.* To the Queen  
Of England bear a sister's salutation ;  
Tell her, that from the bottom of my heart  
I pardon her my death : with penitence  
I beg too *her* forgiveness, for the passion  
With which I spoke to her. May God preserve her,  
And bless her with a long and prosp'rous reign !

*Bur.* Say, have you then not chang'd your resolution,  
Refuse you still all spiritual assistance ?

*Mary.* I have appeas'd my God.—  
My worthy Sir, [to Paulet.]  
I have unwittingly, and innocently,  
Caus'd you much sorrow. I have torn from you  
Your ages last support. O let me hope

You do not think of me in bitterness.—

Paul. [*giving her his hand.*] The Lord be with you!  
go your way in peace.—

*To them Hannah Kennedy, and the other women of the Queen crowd into the room, with marks of horror. The Sheriff follows them, a white staff in his hand; behind are seen through the open doors, men under arms.*

Mary. What ails thee, Hannah?—yes—my hour  
is come—

The Sheriff comes to lead me to my fate,  
And part we must—farewell!—

Ken. and Curl. We will not leave thee,  
We will not part from thee.—

Mary. [*to Melvil.*] You, worthy Sir,  
And my dear faithful Hannah, shall attend me,  
In my last moments. I am sure, my Lord  
Will not refuse my heart this consolation.

Bur. For this I have no warrant.

Mary. How, my Lord;  
Can you refuse me then this small petition?

Respect my sex ; who shall attend me then,  
 And yield me the last service ?—sure it never  
 Can be my sister's pleasure, that in me  
 My sex should be offended ; that these men  
 With their rude hands, should touch my royal person.

*Bur.* 'Tis order'd, that no woman shall ascend  
 With you, the scaffold steps—their tears and moans—

*Mary.* She shall not weep, my Lord, she shall not  
 moan ;

I answer for my Hannah's resolution :  
 Be merciful ; divide me not so soon  
 From my true foster-mother, from my friend.—  
 She bore me on her arms into this life,  
 Let her then gently lead me to my death.—

*Paul.* [*to Burleigh.*] Allow it her.—

*Bur.* Then be it so.—

*Mary.* I now  
 Have nothing in this world to wish for more.

[*she take the crucifix, and kisses it.*

My God ! my Comforter ! my blest Redeemer !  
 As once thy arms were stretch'd upon the cross,  
 Let them be now extended to receive me !

[*she turns round to go, at the same moment her eyes fall*

*upon Leicester, who, on her going, starts involuntarily and turns his eyes towards her: at this sight Mary trembles, her knees fail her, she is about to fall, when Leicester catches at her, and receives her in his arms; she regards him for some time earnestly, and in silence; he cannot support her looks; at length she speaks.*

You keep your word, Lord Leicester: for you promis'd  
To lend your arm to lead me from this prison,  
And now you lend it me; at last the day,  
The long desir'd day's arriv'd, and what  
Was oft the object of my fondest dreams  
Is now accomplish'd: and the Earl of Leicester,  
The long expected, the long wish'd for friend,  
Appears at length in Fotheringay-castle.—  
I see him standing in my prison; all  
Is ready for the journey; all the gates  
Stand open, and at length I cross the threshold,  
Conducted by his hand; and now I leave  
These dismal walls behind me, and for ever.—  
All is fulfill'd, and you have sav'd your honour.—

*[he stands as if annihilated; she continues, with a gentle voice.]*

Yes, Leicester ; not for liberty alone  
 I wish'd to be indebted to your hands—  
 You should too have endear'd my liberty !—  
 Led by your hand, and bless'd by your affection,  
 I hop'd once more to taste the joys of life.—  
 Yes ; now that I'm prepar'd from all the world  
 To part, and to become a happy spirit,  
 Whom earthly inclinations tempt no more ;  
 Now, Leicester, I may venture to confess  
 Without a blush, the frailty I have conquer'd —  
 Farewell, my lord ; and, if you can, be happy !—  
 'Twas your distinguish'd lot to woo two Queens—  
 You have disdain'd a tender, loving heart ;  
 Betray'd it, in the hope to win a proud one :  
 Kneel at the feet of Queen Elizabeth !  
 May your reward not prove your punishment.—  
 Farewell ; I now have nothing more on earth.

*[she goes, preceded by the Sheriff, at her side Melvil,  
 and her Nurse, Burleigh and Paulet follow, the  
 others wailing, follow her with their eyes till she  
 disappears; they then retire through the other two  
 doors.]*

*Leicester, remaining alone.*

And live I still?—can I support to live?—  
 Falls not this roof with all its weight upon me?  
 Gapes no abyss, to swallow in its gulph  
 The veriest wretch on earth? What have I lost?—  
 To throw away this pearl from me!—to cast away  
 The highest happiness in heaven's store!—  
 She meets her death, is deified already;  
 And the despair of hell remains for me!—  
 Where is the purpose, which I had to drown  
 Unfeelingly, the voice of my affection?  
 Unmov'd to see her murdered?—must remorse,  
 Slumb'ring remorse, be waken'd by her presence;  
 Must she in death spread toils of love around me?—  
 Wretch that I am!—no more it suits me now  
 To melt away, in womanly compassion:  
 The bliss of love hath left the paths I tread.—  
 Let me then arm me with a brazen breast-plate,  
 A rock of adamant surround my brows!—  
 Would I not lose the price of my misdeeds,  
 Boldly must I maintain, and execute them.  
 Pity be dumb, my eyes be petrified!



I'll see her fall, I will be witness of it.

*[he goes with resolute steps towards the door, through which Mary passed; but stops suddenly half way.]*

In vain!—the terrors of the damn'd possess me.—

I cannot, cannot see the dreadful deed;

I cannot see her die—Hear!—what was that?

They are already there—beneath my feet

The horrid consummation is prepar'd.—

I hear them speaking—God!—Away—away—

Away from this abode of death and terror!—

*[he attempts to escape by another door; finds it locked, and returns.]*

How!—am I rivetted upon this spot?—

Must I then hear, what I cannot behold?

I hear the Dean address her; he exhorts her;

She interrupts him. Now, I hear her pray.

Her voice is firch—now all is still, quite still!—

I hear but broken sighs and women's moans.—

Now, they undress her—they remove the stool—

She kneels upon the cushion—lays her head—

*[having spoken these last words, and paused awhile, he is seen with a convulsive motion, suddenly to shrink, and faint away; a dull noise of voices is at once heard from below, and continues for some time.]*

*Scene changes to—*THE SECOND CHAMBER IN THE  
FOURTH ACT.

Eliz. [*entering from a side door; her gait and action expressive of the most violent uneasiness.*] No message!—no one here!—stands the sun still  
In its ætherial course?—must I remain  
Longer upon the rack of expectation?  
Is it accomplish'd?—is it not?—I shudder  
At both;—I am afraid to ask the question.  
Leicester and Burleigh are not yet return'd,  
Whom I appointed to fulfill the sentence.—  
Are they already gone?—if so, it is  
Already done; the arrow's shot; it flies,  
It strikes; it has already hit the mark;  
And, were my realm the price, I could not stop it!—  
Who's there?—

*Enter a Page.*

Eliz. Thou com'st alone? Where are the Lords?

Page. My Lord High Treas'rer, and the Earl of  
Leicester—

*Eliz.* Where are they ?—

*Page.* They are not in London.—

*Eliz.* No ?—

Where are they *then* ?—

*Page.* That no one could inform me ;

Before the dawn, mysteriously and hasting,

They quitted London.—

*Eliz.* [*exultingly.*] I am Queen of England !—

[*walking up and down in the greatest agitation.*]

Go—call me—no, remain—no !—she is dead—

Now I at length have room upon this earth.—

Why tremble I ?—why this anxiety ?

My fears are cover'd by the grave ; who dares

To say I did it ?—I have tears enough

In store to weep her fall.—Are *you* still here ?—

[*to the Page.*]

Command the Secretary Davison,

To come to me this instant.—Let the Earl

Of Shrewsbury be summon'd.—Here he comes.—

[*Exit Page.*]

*Enter Shrewsbury.*

*Eliz.* Welcome, my noble Lord ; what brings  
you ?—say—

It cannot be a trifle which hath led  
Your footsteps hither at so late an hour.—

*Shrews.* My Queen, in anxious pain for thy renown,  
I sought the tower, where the secretaries  
Of Mary Stuart are confin'd.—I wish'd  
Once more to put to proof their evidence.—  
On my arrival the lieutenant seem'd  
Embarrass'd and perplex'd ; refus'd to shew me  
His pris'ners ; but my threats obtain'd admittance.  
God ! what a sight was there ! with frantic looks,  
With hair dishevell'd, on his pallet lay  
The Scot, like one tormented by a fury.  
The miserable man no sooner sees me,  
Than falling at my feet, with screams, embracing  
My knees, and writhing like a worm before me ;  
He supplicates, conjures me to relate  
His Sov'reign's destiny. A dread report,

He said, had reach'd the dungeons of the tow'r,  
 That she had been condemn'd to suffer death,—  
 As I confirm'd these tidings, adding too,  
 That 'twas his evidence which had condemn'd her,—  
 Sudden he started up, and rudely seiz'd  
 His fellow pris'ner ; with the giant strength  
 Of madness tore him to the ground, and strove  
 To strangle him : no sooner had we sav'd  
 The wretch from his fierce grapple, than at once  
 He turn'd his rage against himself, and beat  
 With savage fists his bosom ; curs'd himself  
 And his companions to the depths of hell !  
 His evidence was false ; the fatal letters  
 To Babington, which he had testified  
 As genuine, were forg'd ; he had transcrib'd  
 Quite diff'rent words from those the Queen had  
     spoken,  
 The traitor Nare had led him to this treason.—  
 Then ran he to the window, tore it open  
 With frantic violence, and scream'd aloud  
 Into the street below, that all the people  
 Together crowded.—I, cried he, am he ;  
 The Secretary of the Queen of Scotland,

The traitor, who accus'd his mistress falsely;  
Accurst for ever !—I have borne false witness.

*Eliz.* You said yourself, that he had lost his wits ;  
A madman's words prove nothing.—

*Shrews.* Yet his madness  
Itself proves but the more.—O gracious Queen !  
Let me conjure thee ; be not over hasty ;  
Command the cause to be again examin'd.

*Eliz.* It shall be done, my Lord, because you wish it,  
Not in the meaning, that the noble peers  
Can in this case have giv'n a hasty judgment.  
For your tranquillity, my Lord, the trial  
Shall be renew'd—well, that 'tis not too late—  
'Tis very well—no—not the smallest shade  
Of doubt shall rest upon our royal honour.—

*Enter Davison.*

*Eliz.* Give me the sentence, Sir, which to your care  
I late committed ;—where is it ?—

*Dav.* [*in the utmost astonishment.*] The sentence!—

*Eliz.* [*more urgent.*] Which lately I entrusted to  
your keeping.—

*Dav.* Entrusted to my keeping!—

*Eliz.* As the people

Press'd me to sign it, I was forc'd to yield—

I did so ; yet forsooth unwillingly,

And laid the paper in your hand.—I wish'd

But to gain time ; you must remember well

What I then said to you.—Now, Sir, where is it ?—

*Shrews.* Give it, good Sir ; affairs since then have  
taken

Another turn, the cause must be renew'd.

*Dav.* Renew'd !—eternal mercy !

*Eliz.* Why this pause,

This hesitation ?—say, Sir, where's the paper ?

*Dav.* I am undone ! I am destroy'd for ever !

*Eliz.* [*interrupting him violently.*] Let me not fancy,  
Sir—

*Dav.* O I am lost !—

I have it not,—

*Eliz.* How ? what ?

*Shrews.* O, God in heav'n !

*Dav.* It is in Burleigh's hands ; since yesterday—

*Eliz.* Wretch that you are ! have you then thus  
obey'd me ?

Was it not my express command to you  
To keep it carefully ?

*Dav.* My Queen, thou gav'st  
No such command—

*Eliz.* Vile traitor !—will you then  
Accuse me of a falsehood ?—when did I  
Direct you to deliver it to Burleigh ?—

*Dav.* Not in express, plain words ; yet—

*Eliz.* Dare you then  
Interpret, as you list, my words, and lay  
Your bloody meaning on them ? Woe betide you,  
If evil come of this officious deed !—  
Yes, Sir ; your life shall answer the event.—  
Earl Shrewsbury, you see how here my name  
Is sported with !—

*Shrews.* I see !—O God in heav'n !—

*Eliz.* What say you ?—

*Shrews.* If the Knight has dar'd to act  
In this, upon his own authority,  
Without thy knowledge, he must be conven'd  
Before the high tribunal of the peers,  
For subjecting thy name to the contempt  
And loathing of all future generations.



*Enter Burleigh.*

*Bur.* [*bowing his knee before the Queen.*] Long life  
and glory to my royal mistress,  
And may all enemies of her dominions  
End like this Stuart.— [*Shrewsbury hides his face;—*

*Davison wrings his hands in desperation.*

*Eliz.* Speak; my lord; receiv'd you  
From me the fatal warrant?—

*Bur.* No, my Queen,  
From Davison.—

*Eliz.* And did he in my name  
Deliver it?—

*Bur.* No, that I cannot say.—

*Eliz.* And dar'd you then to execute the writ  
Thus hastily, nor wait to know my pleasure? —  
For this my Lord, I banish you my presence;  
And as this forward will was *yours* alone,  
Bear *you* alone the curse of the misdeed!—

[*to Davison.*

For, you, Sir; who have trait'rously o'erstepp'd

The bounds of your commission, and betray'd  
 A sacred pledge entrusted to your care,  
 A more severe tribunal is prepar'd :—  
 Let him be straight conducted to the tow'r,  
 And capital arraignments fil'd against him.—  
 My honest Talbot, you alone have prov'd,  
 'Mongst all my counsellors, a man of justice ;—  
 Be you henceforth my leader, and my friend.

*Shrews.* O ! banish not your most obsequious friends.  
 Cast not those into prison, who for you  
 Have acted ; those who now for you are silent.  
 But suffer me, great Queen, to lay the charge,  
 With which twelve years you have entrusted me,  
 Down in your royal hands, and take my leave.—

*Eliz.* [*surprised.*] No, Shrewsbury ; you surely  
 would not now  
 Desert me ? no ; not now.—

*Shrews.* Excuse me, Lady ;  
 I am too old, and this right hand is grown  
 Too stiff, to ratify your later actions.

*Eliz.* And will he leave me, who has sav'd my life ?

*Shrews.* But little have I done ;—I could not save  
 Your nobler part.—Live, govern happily !

Your foe is dead ; now have you nothing more  
To fear, and therefore, owe respect to nothing.

[*Exit.*

Eliz. [*to the Earl of Kent, who enters.*] Send for the  
Earl of Leicester.

*Kent.* He demands

Excuse—he is, 'tis said, embark'd for France.

[*the Curtain drops.*

THE END.

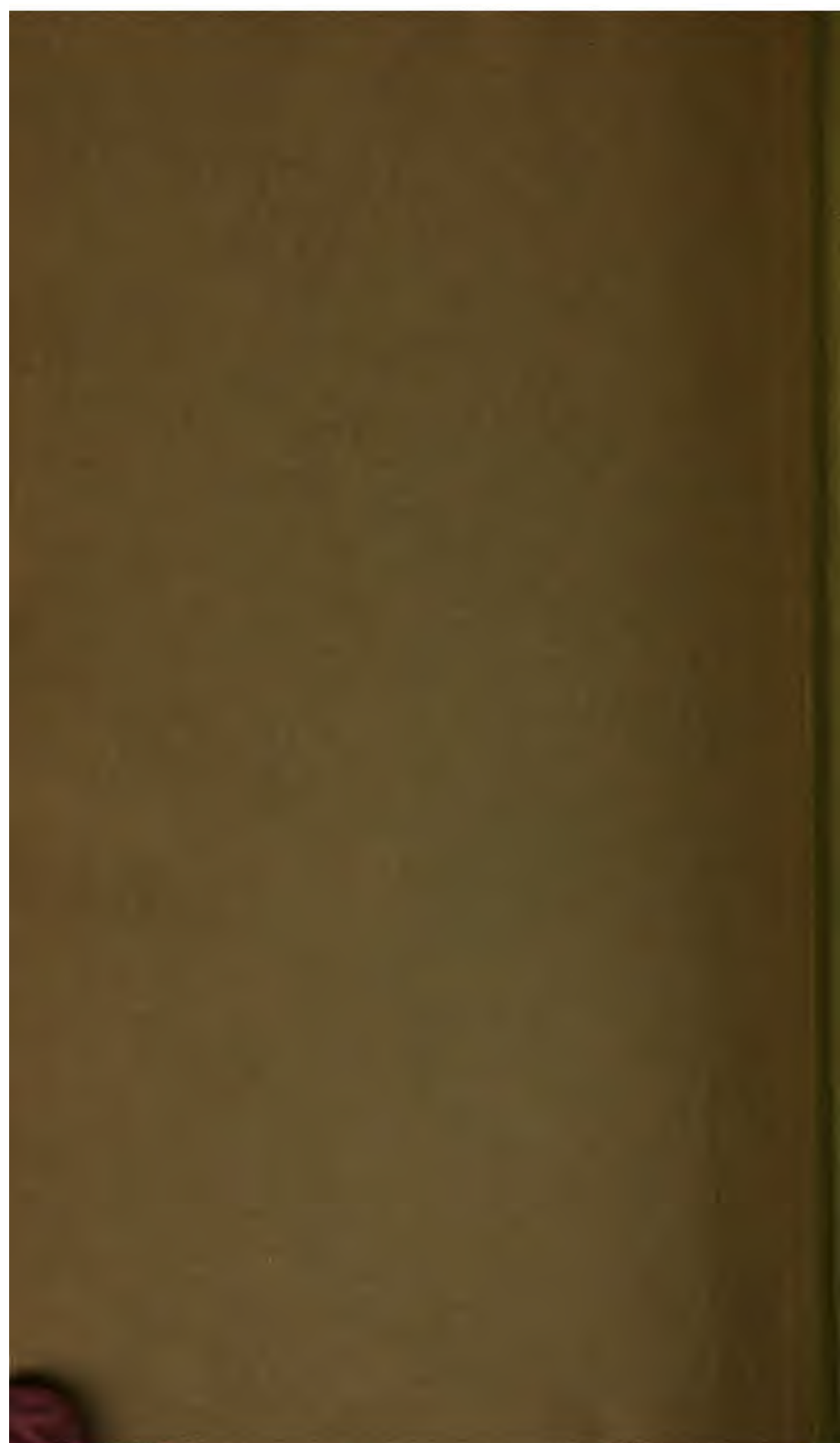
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